

Bamboo Gods and Bionic Boys: A Brief History of the Philippines' B Films

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As one of the Asian region's and (at one point) the world's most prolific film cultures, the Philippines is distinguished by an under appreciated parallel cinema that comprises films for international release. This paper considers the heretofore untold history of the emergence of this phenomenon, from the breakdown of the post-WWII studio system, inspects the usefulness of available descriptors such as "independent" and export films, and focuses on the still-problematizable "B films" term as the most appropriate one for the present study. It tracks the many twists and turns in the narrative of B-film production, with careful attention to the auteurs (not just directors but also producers and performers) who played prominent roles in ensuring that this parallel sub-industry would be able to thrive alongside the better-recognized mainstream one.

Keywords: Philippine cinema, Golden Age, B filmmaking, independent production, export films

Large sections of the Philippines are a jungle—sadly these days, more figuratively than literally—and are unfamiliar terrain for all but the most adventurous. The same can be said for its cinema, an elusive beast whose language and iconography are incomprehensible to most viewers on the outside of their tangled vines.

The Republic of the Philippines is one of Asia's oldest film producers. In the '60s and '70s, it was also one of the most prolific film cultures in the world, peaking in 1971 with 234 features.¹ And yet, the vast majority of these features—shot on film, and drawing from their own pantheon of superstars—would never travel further than the Philippines' borders. For a nation considered part of the Third World, this was a staggering achievement: a not-so-miniature version of Hollywood or India's Bollywood, virtually unknown to the rest of the movie-watching world.

Running parallel to the booming local film industry from the '60s until the late '80s was a thriving export trade in exotic and relatively cheap features for the international market. Enterprising producers in the Philippines

sought to capture a much wider audience than Manila and the provinces, and teamed up with overseas companies to form co-productions, or found an international distributor for their home-grown product. Like Italy and Mexico, and later Hong Kong, Japan, Indonesia and Taiwan, the Philippines found its niche in international markets among the more disreputable of genres—the so-called *Bfilms*—while its more respectable art and commercial cinema, beyond overseas film festival appearances, went unnoticed.

Furthermore, the push into the international market came from a remarkably small number of independent producers rather than from the Philippines' studio system. Indeed, many of the export trade's production companies formed a Filipino facsimile of Hollywood's Poverty Row from the 1930s, producing B-level potboilers for the roadshow market in direct competition with the major studio system (in the Philippines' case, the Big Three studios of Sampaguita, LVN, and Premiere). Hollywood's Poverty Row producers not only exploited current trends in populist cinema; they were responsible for outright theft, at the same time testing the boundaries of what was "decent" and "acceptable." For both the Philippines' own Poverty Row *and* the major studios, a copycat industry developed which thumbed its nose at the Berne Convention on copyright, to which the Philippines had been a signatory since 1952.² Clones of then-popular movies appeared as early as the 1950s ranging from cheeky parodies to bare-faced plagiarism, appropriating not only themes, ideas, and plot lines but also characters, titles, and music. For the most blatant acts of theft, geographic isolation helped, coupled with the seemingly impossible task of mounting a court action in a foreign country. For lesser offenders, the never-ending cycle of copying foreign blockbusters continued unabated. For every *Platoon* (1986) or *Rambo: First Blood Part II* (1985), there was an avalanche of jungle-bound action films; *Mad Max 2* (1981) spawned *W Is War* (1983), *Mad Warriors* (a.k.a. *Clash of the Warlords*, 1984), *Searchers of the Voodoo Mountain* (a.k.a. *Warriors of the Apocalypse*, 1985), and a rash of post-apocalyptic action films from prolific film producer/director Cirio H. Santiago.

Terms in the modern Western vernacular such as "independent" and "mainstream," or "A" and "B" movies, have little relevance to the Philippines' own film history. In the context of the Philippines, an *A film* is one imbued with the qualities of artistic or commercial merit; it's a subjective definition at best, and one dictated by the subject's own prejudices. An A film in the Philippines can be either be a feel-good melodrama with a cast drawn from the pantheon of Manila's acting elite, a literary epic based on the works of a respected author such as Jose Rizal, or an edgy, subversive, overseas festival winner with little chance of success at the domestic box office. Similarly, B films are just as difficult to define. In its purest sense, a B film is one

relegated to the bottom half of a double film, scheduled before the main (or A) feature. Modern usage of the term B film has expanded in two ways. In a broader and more traditional sense, B denotes a film of lesser importance or inferior quality by traditional critical and academic standards. Second, and particularly if discussing films in terms of genre, B is a brand which denotes the more disreputable of genres—war films, Westerns, simplistic action movies, fantasy and horror films, and sex-themed exploitation features—regardless of their quality. Thus, a Fritz Lang Western or a film noir feature by Edgar G. Ulmer may be regarded as a film of artistic merit while occupying a place in the B movie ghetto. It's seemingly a paradox not lost on the Philippines' own A-list auteurs, many of whom—Lino Brocka, Eddie Romero, Ishmael Bernal, and Celso Ad. Castillo included—have worked across the broadest spectrum of genres including horror and soft-core pornography. In terms of this paper's usage, and strictly provisionally with an acknowledgment of the instability of the term, B Film will be deployed as a description of Philippine product from a primarily American but also secondarily global perspective; hence a film may be a major production in local terms, in the extreme sense that it may feature “star” auteurs or performers and a sizeable budget proceeding from an established studio, but upon its entry in the global distribution circuit, its lower production cost (relative to foreign standards) and unrecognized talents relegate it to the ranks of the B's, as opposed to, say, the similarly low-budget and still-unknown output promoted (via European film festivals) as Third-World or Third-cinema style films intended for the art film market. (This would also have some bearing on this paper's playful use of tropes from the films produced in this mode—i.e., folk material inflecting global motion-picture fantasies on the one hand and Western pop myths finding their way into native content: bamboo gods and bionic boys, respectively.)

Likewise, the phrase *independent cinema* has been wrested from its textbook definition in recent years and adapted into the modern rhetoric to suggest any number of a film's *indie* qualities: its quirkiness, the auteur status of its director, a non-traditional narrative, its low budget, its potentially abrasive or taboo subject matter. To this day, the Philippines continues to produce its “art” cinema—auteurist, experimental, avant-garde, digital—from both inside and outside the studio system, with the largest producer Star Cinema capitalizing in recent years on the digital *New Wave*. “Independent” as used in this paper will thus be restricted to its original definition, indicating those films operating outside of the larger studio system.

Export Films

The term “export” film is also a problematic one, considering the varying degrees of input from foreign production companies. It’s useful to imagine a sliding scale between International Productions, in which Filipino input is almost non-existent, to local films, which are by their definition for the Tagalog-only market.

1. International Productions – features using the Philippines as a cheap or exotic location, utilizing a predominantly overseas cast and crew, with locals as extras or technicians only. From as early as the John Wayne war movie *Back to Bataan* (1945) to Francis Ford Coppola’s *Apocalypse Now* (1979) and Oliver Stone’s *Platoon* (1986), and *Born on the Fourth of July* (1989), the Philippines still functions to this day as an anonymous Asian or South American locale.
2. Co-Productions – the preferred route for smaller film companies in which local producers often cover “below-line” costs—shooting expenses, salaries for local cast and crew, many of whom occupy major acting and technical roles. American B film distributor Roger Corman, for example, worked in tandem with Cirio H. Santiago’s Premiere Productions on most of his Philippine-lensed films.
3. Filipino Exports – local productions designed for the foreign market and filmed in English. Films from local producers such as BAS Films’ Bobby A. Suarez and Silver Star Productions’ K.Y. Lim are funded primarily or entirely with local finance, with foreigners usually occupying the lead roles only.
4. Tagalog Exports – films destined for the local market, which are subsequently purchased by an enterprising local or overseas distributor, invariably re-edited and dubbed into one or more foreign languages, and sold overseas. Both Cinex and Davian International Ltd. were prolific distributors based in the Philippines, reworking Tagalog-language war and action films to meet the demands of the international marketplace.
5. Local films – like the majority of all Filipino A and B films, crafted for local sensibilities and never intended to be screened outside the Tagalog-speaking community, and thus are almost never subtitled or dubbed into English.

A historiographical dissection of B filmmaking in the Philippines is thereby a multi-tiered effort, examining the relationships between the independents and the larger studios, analyzing the effect of popular culture outside the Philippines on its storytelling traditions, and tracing the development of a Filipino B-film export industry from within the independents. Both National Artist and film director Eddie Romero and digital avant-garde filmmaker Khavn de la Cruz told the researcher, half-jokingly, “All Filipino films are B films” (personal communication, February 24, 2007). While they were referring to the budgets of most Filipino productions compared to their Western counterparts, one could almost be tempted into reading into their statements a degree of cultural cringe present within critical circles, which relegates more populist fare to the “not worthy of discussion” basket.

At its best, the Filipino B film is a fascinating creature. In this list, I would personally include many of Bobby A. Suarez’s James Bond/*kung fu* hybrids, the midget spy films starring Weng Weng, the baffling *Death Wish* (1974) meets *Mad Max* (1978) scenario of *W* (a.k.a. *W Is War*, 1983), and many others. Western audiences are very much the foreigner, the outsider to these seemingly jarring cultural dislocations, astounding leaps of logic, and an almost free-form jazzy interplay of icons and signifiers. For at least some Western viewers, part of the pleasure of viewing such films is to see familiar figures reflected back from an amusement park hall of mirrors. Even at their most mediocre and mundane, the B films are still an intriguing social and political barometer, a gauge of censorship restrictions, audience expectations, industry changes, and reactions to both its own culture and the outside world. Through the B film, one can witness generic boundaries ever shifting and constantly being tested. And perhaps more than most countries, the Filipino B film is such a mutant stew of outside influences—a legacy of its American occupation and a policy of pacification and distraction through popular culture—and the Philippines’ own storytelling tradition, itself muddied somewhat by its prior occupation by the Spanish (cf. Deocampo, 1994). It’s the Philippines’ unique synthesis of these opposing forces which gives its cinema its character. The resulting indigenizing process (cf. Velasco, 2009)—which I prefer to call “Pinoyization,” in acknowledgment of the specificity of its transformation—results in a gumbo with such a unique and instantly recognizable set of faces, backgrounds, and story elements, that almost qualifies the Filipino B film as a genre unto itself.

The more useful rubric for this study would be that of cult cinema, through which B-film appreciators (and their observers) regard their appreciation of such output. Umberto Eco’s much-quoted essay on *Casablanca* (1986) dwells on the difficulty of attempting to describe what he recognizes as a

postmodern phenomenon, related by Timothy Corrigan in *Film and the Culture of Cult*, (1991) to Susan Sontag's problematization of camp. Perhaps the safest reworking of this approach would be to take any observation of cult cinema as highly provisional and possibly always overdetermined. In this respect one could start with the observation that, in the case of the Philippine B film vis-à-vis a few prior specifications of cult cinema, some properties hold up and others either do not apply or do so differently. J.P. Telotte's (1991) "Beyond All Reason: The Nature of the Cult," for example, describes such things as typified by a relatively successful second life after an unsuccessful first, repeated viewings by the same audiences, a forthright crudeness of presentation, and an interaction with rising gay awareness and feminist consciousness (1991, pp. 7-8). In terms of audience responses, however, his descriptions of use of costumes and memorization of dialog may not apply as much as the formation of responses (laughter and shock, sometimes together) to certain plot developments and lines of dialog (page number? 14); thus his critique of cult responses as ultimately restoring the repression of the wider social context by providing an equivalent set of in-screening rules is rendered extraneous to the concerns of the Pinoy B-film. Also the tension in Bruce Kawin's observation in "After Midnight" of there being programmatic as well as inadvertent cult items (1991) is not only implicitly resolved by Corrigan's (1991) assertion that "all cult films are adopted children" (p. 27), and therefore cannot be deliberately (as in naturally) created; occasionally, in the martial-law context of B-film production, some local planning or programming may have been done by certain specific power players—including, in a manner of speaking, those who opposed or objected to the films—but the resultant overseas cult status can only be seen as inadvertent in a context where, as explained earlier, film does not hold the same sociocultural value as, say, religion or politics, which do definitely have cults of their own, some as extreme as they come.

Perhaps another way of viewing the issue of the "classifiability" of Filipino B films is to regard these (and once more, we risk the announcement of exceptions to the rule in such a totalizing statement) in terms of Telotte's (1991) two poles, which turn out to be, synchronically speaking, three: the classical item, the midnight movie, and the then-already-extinct art film. Like all other national cinemas, that of the Philippines' industrial model may have been Hollywood, but its inspiration would be far from it. Another way of looking at this is in terms of the Philippines' postcolonial ambivalence toward cinema in general and Hollywood in particular: where classical narratives have governed commercialist imperatives, Filipino filmmakers who managed to wangle non-commercialist assignments would look to European modes of practice—i.e., neorealism during the '50s studio system (Philippine cinema's

first Golden Age) and the New Wave during the latter Marcos era or Second Golden Age (David, 1990). For pedantry's sake it would still be possible to associate the B-film release with the "Midnight Movie" (cf. Hoberman & Rosenbaum, 1983) in the literal sense that it deals with the outcast denizens of the Third World, as well as in the literary sense that its primarily potentially violent and free-for-all settings may be all that any viewer could safely ask for in a place where the onscreen dangers can become all too real.

A more crucial means of appreciating the Filipino B film would be not just Telotte's (1991) prescription of transgression and recuperation, but rather Barry K. Grant's (1991) furtherance of this concept (in "Science Fiction Double Feature") by describing the process as achieved "through a particular inflection of the figure of the Other" (p. 124), to the extent of turning the latter into "a caricature that makes what it represents less threatening to the viewer" (p. 124). In fact these movies, if one wishes to push this argument to its logical extreme, may be seen as going beyond any singular project of transgressing, much less recuperating, an *Other*, by the simple reason of its having a multitude of Others—its Other, in effect, constituted by an accumulation of types rather than by traditionally constructed characters.

Gold Fever

When Philippine cinephiles speak of a Golden Age of Filipino cinema, they refer more often than not to the '50s, and of a film industry dominated by a studio system in which the independents are sidelined. Since its inception in the opening decades of the 20th century, the Filipino film industry was, is, and perhaps is destined to be, a microcosm of its inspiration: Hollywood, the macrocosm—a predicament confronted in varying degrees by all "Free World" non-US national cinemas (Higson, 2002). The dominant Big Three studios (Sampaguita Pictures, presided over by the Vera-Perez family, LVN by the de Leons, and Premiere Productions under the Santiagos) were a miniaturized version of Hollywood's Big Eight in the '30s: dynastic studio heads reigned supreme over their own extended family *and* the major filmmaking families. Frothy comedy-musicals or melodramas driven by the studios' brightest stars were the order of the day. With the exception of a few "directors as stars"—a proto-version of auteurship (*Genghis Khan's* Manuel Conde, for instance, or later Lamberto V. Avellana and Gerardo de Leon)—directors were relegated to the status of mere technician; again, this is a reflection of Golden-Era Hollywood's natural pecking order. Furthermore, if we cast our critical eye over those films which established the big-name directors, they tend to be populist, sentimental epics and have a propensity to win the Filipino Academy of Movie Arts and Sciences (FAMAS) awards (Avellana's *Huk sa Bagong Pamumuhay* [1954], for instance, or de Leon's

adaptations of the works of national hero Jose Rizal). Those films are probably classics, but are framed in such a way that they have the word “important” stamped all over them; just like the David Leans and Cecil B. de Milles before them, the “important” or “epic” movie becomes a genre unto itself.

As in the macrocosm, the majority of the microcosm’s output is cheap, escapist and ultimately disposable pop culture, catering to what director Avellana derisively labelled the “bakya” crowd (Lacaba, 1970)—the wooden-clogged lower classes who, for a few pesos, could immerse themselves in a masala of humor, conflict, tears and resolution, often with accompanying sing-along musical numbers, all crammed into an enjoyably predictable two-hour package. As mass entertainment it’s a vehicle required to be driven by stars the audiences recognize and identify with, and in the case of action films, slavishly follow a simplistic good guys versus bad guys scenario in which sheer brute force allows good to triumph over evil. A few directors were able to transcend the limitations placed upon them by near-sighted producers—Avellana through his stage background, insistence on actors rather than stars, and his complex social-realist scripts; Eddie Romero, attempting work akin to Italian neorealism in a Filipino setting; and Gerardo de Leon, a visionary as well as a true craftsman in lighting and composition. Such directors with indelible personal stamps on their work can be considered auteurs—like their Hollywood contemporaries (Alfred Hitchcock and John Ford, for instance), were bound by studio demands of audience-friendly narratives, styles, stars, and genres.

Until the proliferation of TV sets in the ’70s, the cheapest forms of pop culture in the Philippines were radio (free) and *komiks* (less than one peso), with movies in a slightly more expensive third place. Komiks were graphic narrative fictions that resembled heavily illustrated magazines (much like American comic books) and were designed as much for adults as children. They had previously made a half-hearted appearance before World War II, but made their biggest impact in the late ’40s, spearheading a concerted campaign of continuous American cultural hegemony and mass distraction. The text may have been in Tagalog, but their characters were clearly inspired by American archetypes—thus Mars Ravelo’s superheroine *Darna* is a mildly Pinoy-ized reworking of DC’s Superman and Wonder Woman, while there’s no doubt whatsoever over the origin of Francisco V. Coching’s jungle-bound, loincloth-wearing, Tarzan-like *Dumagit*.

Readership flourished of this derivative yet distinctly Filipino, cheap, and instantly disposable form of popular culture, and in a strange twist became iconic of a culture of resistance; in fact the artists’ unique visual style and Pinoy-ized content of the more popular komiks became so recognizable as

Filipino that it's no surprise almost half of Filipino films in the '50s and '60s were adaptations of popular komiks serials (radio programs accounted for much less source material, as did television shows from the '70s onwards). Characters already pre-branded in komiks franchises were a safe way of ensuring a ready-made audience, and opportunities to cross-promote each other's products were exploited to the hilt; often the feature version was released just weeks before a strip's resolution, maximizing profits for both parties. For some komiks authors (Coching and Ravelo above all others), their name was almost as important as the star's.

Like the macrocosm, the microcosm's popular culture was being shaped in the post-war period by comics, radio, and movies, and so film genres mirror those of the US-influenced komiks: romance, family melodrama, crime, Westerns, war, horror, comedy, science fiction, and superheroes. Musicals were both a Hollywood convention and a natural progression from the Philippines' own *zarzuela* stage culture; religious pictures, on the other hand, were more prevalent in the fervently Catholic country. In the '50s the local studios were still looking for mass acceptance for their films, regarded by the more sophisticated of audiences as poor imitations of the much superior product from the West. Filipino films were thus caught in a bind: smaller audiences allow only for smaller budgets, which means cost-slashing, penny-pinching, and a less-than-adventurous spirit. The belief that their own films are somehow second-rate was, and to a certain extent still is, indicative of a crisis of self-confidence in Filipino culture.

The Tagalog film industry's parochial distribution model was set in concrete: premiere the film in Manila to recoup costs, then roadshow the movie through the provinces for profits—so that notions of international sales are hardly considered. As a result, stars are only stars within the Philippines; FAMAS awards and critical acclaim are never recognized outside the country's borders. It was hardly a unique situation; consider the cinematic reach of the rest of Southeast Asia and Hong Kong at the time, not to mention Australia, Turkey, India, and, until the late '50s, Mexico.

The Star System

In very real terms of declining box office receipts, the Big Three were in decline as the '50s rolled into the '60s, a period coinciding with a changing of the guard within the star system: the rise of a new Rat Pack of young Filipino actors comprising Fernando Poe Jr, Zaldy Zshornack, and Joseph Estrada, among others. All were coached in the James Dean School of Troubled Teens—brooding, violent (though always righteous), and oozing more sex appeal than ever. Emerging superstar and later filmic phenomenon Fernando Poe Jr. was the first actor of his generation³ to challenge the

Big Three's star system, demanding and receiving a substantially larger paycheck—8,000 pesos, instead of his usual fee of 3,000 pesos a picture from his Premiere Productions contract (cf. Santos, 2008a)—from brash and hungry independent company Hollywood Far-East Productions, for the Pinoy Western *Markado* (Barri, 1960). Together with Zaldy Zshornack, the two pooled their resources and formed Poe-Zshornack Productions, the first actor-run production company since Leopoldo Salcedo Productions in the early '50s, releasing three reasonable successes in 1960-61. Tagalog Ilang-Ilang Productions (or TIIP), a newer player formed in 1960 by the Laxa family (including future star Antonio Laxa, a.k.a. Tony Ferrer), was initially supplied by Premiere's stable of stars; they in turn encouraged their young stars to form their own production companies, with TIIP as distributor, while bankrolling profitable star vehicles for their own company. Thus Poe's solo company, FPJ Productions, and Joseph Estrada's JE Productions and Emar Productions, emerged from under TIIP's protective wing to become two of the '60s' major independents.

Other actors followed, forming a mass exodus from the withering studio system and creating new power blocs within a changing industry. Just as the major studios were dynastic in nature, so too were those run by star-producers. FPJ Productions fostered the careers of Poe's siblings Andy and Conrad; Poe's wife Susan Roces formed her own successful company Rosas Films; the Philippines' King of Comedy, Dolphy, established his own RVQ Productions with most of his siblings and numerous offspring on the payroll. These former studio contract players were no longer under the protection of their surrogate studio families, but carried with them the discipline, the industry savvy, and a carefully manicured profile courtesy of their previous bosses Premiere, Sampaguita, or LVN. Confidence in the Tagalog film industry, both from within its ranks and its audience, climbed progressively throughout the '60s, from 94 features in 1960 to a staggering 234 in the industry's peak year of 1971. Out of a total of 97 production companies active that year, former giants Sampaguita limped in with seven features, and Premiere with just three (Pareja, 1994). Productions started to decline in number from all three majors from the start of the '60s for a variety of reasons, not least of all the staleness of their formulae (A. Fuentes, personal communication, November 12, 2008).

The new generation of stars and independent producers signaled a shift in content, with action films in particular taking on a cartoonishly darker tone. They became known in the Philippines as *Goon* movies, an apt description of a peculiar quality of action films entirely unique to the Philippines. Goons are the gorilla-like bit players, not quite actors and not quite stuntmen but primarily the henchmen of the villains (the Spanish derivative *contravida*,

Filipinized as *kontrabida*), who populate low-budget action films solely for the hero (the *vida* or *bida*) to beat senseless. The term goon can be attached to any number of action-centric films: from Pinoy war films and Westerns popular throughout the '60s, the urban revenge and gangster movies, the spy and superhero craze in the mid-'60s, the action film parodies of Dolphy and Chiquito, the karate-themed action films of the late '60s, and the kung-fu and vigilante films of the '70s and beyond. The Philippines is perhaps the only country in the world whose film producers list their ubiquitous stunt teams alongside actors in a film's credits; groups like SOS Daredevils and Thunder Stuntmen were, during the heyday of Goon Cinema from the early '60s to the mid-'80s, almost as famous as Fernando Poe Jr. himself.

Most goons are stuntmen whose names graduate to the bottom half of the credits and, as a result, become recognizable identities unto themselves. Some graduate from stuntman to stunt coordinator or fight choreographer, and then onward to associate director, screenwriter, and ultimately director. Former SOS Daredevil Wilfredo Milan (personal communication, July 10, 2007), one of the most prolific goon action directors since the early '80s, described a goon to me as a "shrimp": great-looking body, with a tiny, ugly head. Other than providing a punching bag for our slap-happy heroes, a goon's main acting requirements consist of over-reacting to every line of dialogue, shuffling nervously, smoking incessantly through their voluminous moustaches, and looking uncomfortable in a 200-peso suit or, if filmed in the disco-era '70s and beyond, in a garishly colored polyester shirt (open, of course, to just above the navel). Goons were staples in each successive wave of action films: from the James Bond clones of the mid-'60s, through the late-'60s karate craze and '70s kung-fu phenomenon, into the jungle rebel films of the '80s. The films were cheaper, louder, more vulgar than their '50s counterparts, and indicative to some of a general decline in artistic standards within the film industry.⁴

Premiere Productions emerged in the post-War period as one of the Philippines' three largest production houses. Cirio H. Santiago had grown up in the studio owned by his parents and in 1957, aged only 21, had enough business acumen to foresee the grim future that awaited the Big Three. Of particular interest to Santiago were the opportunities to be made in the lucrative and ever-expanding American drive-in circuit. As television claimed much of the family segment of America's movie-going audience, and A films were premiering in urban cinemas, the drive-ins became the domain of independent distributors plying an increasingly youthful market with more salacious, genre-driven fare: teen exploitation, monster movies, and cheap war movies, often on double and triple bills.⁵ With dreams of taking his films to the world's screens, and with the American drive-in

circuit firmly in his sights, Santiago took a huge financial risk for Premiere: along with Eddie Romero, he set up the Philippines' first production for the international market.

First Salvo

The Day of the Trumpet (Romero, 1957) is ostensibly a Western set during the Philippine-American War at the turn of the 20th century, produced by Santiago and Gerardo de Leon, and written and directed by de Leon's protégé, the talented Eddie Romero. In a Philippine first, Romero filmed the dialogue in English with imported American leads John Agar, Richard Arlen, and Myron Healey, secured via his successful attempts at securing overseas funding. Boasting much better production values than most local films of its era, it would nevertheless take six years for the film, re-titled *Cavalry Command*, to be sold to an American distributor. In the interim, Santiago set up a second feature through his own Cirio Santiago Film Organization—the noir-like thriller *Man on the Run* (1958) once again directed by Eddie Romero and starring American actor Burgess Meredith, whom Romero met in the United States during post-production on *The Day of the Trumpet*. Meredith accepted the paltry sum of US \$2,000 for just three weeks' work in Manila for a film Romero credits as opening the doors for his overseas film career (Server, 1999, p. 49).

Romero's efforts were noticed by American producer and distributor Kane W. Lynn, whose World War II adventures gave him a strong connection with Southeast Asia, and who by 1959 had set up Lynro Productions with Eddie Romero to create a series of low-budget thrillers and war films for the American drive-ins, starting with *The Scavengers* (a.k.a. *City of Sin*, 1959), and followed by *Moro Witch Doctor* (1964), *The Walls of Hell* (a.k.a. *Intramuros*, 1964), and *The Ravagers* (1965), among others. Lynn's company, Hemisphere Pictures, distributed the finished films from Lynro, and later from Romero's Filipinas Productions, a company formed with expatriate American actor Mike Parsons. As luck would have it, in the '60s Eddie Romero would have a much better strike rate than Santiago exporting his own productions.

Santiago himself continued to pursue a career in the international market—his production of Gerardo de Leon's vampire film *Kulay Dugo ang Gabi* (1964), distributed by Hemisphere Pictures in 1966 as *The Blood Drinkers*, is a bona-fide classic of Filipino horror—while keeping Premiere Productions afloat. By the early '70s Premiere began seeking out co-production deals with countries other than the US, with a Columbian company co-financing *Tarzan and the Brown Prince* (1972) starring American actor Steve Hawkes and a popular child actor from the Philippines,

Robin (son of action director/actor Jun) Aristorenas. Premiere, one of the Big Three studios of the '50s, was rapidly evolving to become primarily, though not exclusively, a production unit for international features and co-productions. LVN ceased making films almost completely in 1961 and served as a renowned post-production facility; Sampaguita, its production schedules already battered by the onslaught of the independents, continued making films at a much reduced capacity until it closed down production altogether in 1982.

Clearly the '60s were a turbulent time for the major studios, and a period of consolidation and change for the independents. Surprisingly, very few enterprising producers, with the exception of Cirio H. Santiago and Eddie Romero, actively sought out co-productions with overseas companies, or distribution deals for their dubbed-into-English local productions. It took until the late '60s for the first Philippine company to launch a serious campaign to sell its all-Filipino creations to the world. Nepomuceno Productions was formed in 1967 by Luis Nepomuceno, son of pioneering Filipino filmmaker Jose. Luis's new company logo proudly proclaimed it was a "symbol of quality films since 1917" and, within a year, was able to reinforce his hyperbole with a series of FAMAS award-winners featuring his then-wife Charito Solis (subsequently listed as "Asia's Best Actress" in her Nepomuceno Productions credits).⁶ Although the company had met with only middling success with its first attempt at the world market, the Romero-directed war film *Manila, Open City* (1968) with Solis and American drive-in heartthrob John Ashley, Luis nevertheless forged ahead and produced the controversial *Igorota* (1968).

Clearly intended as an "epic" melodramatic saga of love and conflict between tradition (in the shapely form of Solis as the titular mountain princess) and modernity (Fred Galang playing Princess Maia's Manila husband), it was filmed in English and released in several territories overseas in a much racier version; in fact, for any film released commercially in 1968 regardless of its origin, *Igorota* features a startling amount of frank nudity and sexuality. Once again, international sales were modest, yet Nepomuceno decided to mortgage his studio for an even more ambitious project, the period martial arts film *The Pacific Connection* (a.k.a. *Stickfighter*, 1974) with Hollywood artists Nancy Kwan (*The World of Suzy Wong*, [1960]), Guy Madison, and Dean Stockwell alongside the Philippines' former Mr. Universe competitor Roland Dantes. Despite its release at the height of the international *kung fu* craze, the film failed to set overseas box offices ablaze and, unable to absorb the spiraling costs of Hollywood-style salaries and primping his product to international standards, Nepomuceno watched his own studio, his filmmaking aspirations, and his family's 57-year filmic

legacy go up in smoke.⁷ Ironically, the three productions that Nepomuceno's "symbol of quality" will be known for outside the Philippines represent three of the least respectable genres: war, sex, and martial arts.

Nepomuceno's story may have seemed like a cautionary tale for all but those with a fearless pioneering spirit and pesos to potentially burn. Despite a peak in film production in 1971 to 234 features, a remarkable feat for any developing nation, and a relatively favorable run throughout the '70s, there was still an emphasis on catering to the domestic market, with its parochial themes and time-tested formulae, and thus most locally produced films failed to make it beyond the Philippines' borders. The majority of the independents, having overtaken the Big Three's supremacy, merely aped the constrictions of genre and star power, their perception of audience expectations and distribution model of the majors. Film became more of a cookie-cutter industry than ever; one success was followed by thirty imitations, mostly of greatly inferior quality. Many independents were fly-by-night outfits lucky to make one rag-end movie before disappearing forever; the *bomba* (soft-core sex film) era of 1970-72⁸ saw the greatest drop in quality, as producers scrambled over each other to make an obscene amount of money during the short-lived sex-film craze—even to the point of inserting hard-core footage (a process known as *singit* [insertion]) into films playing in the provinces, outside the authorities' watchful gaze (J. Garcia, personal communication, July 10, 2007). More than ever, the profit motive was paramount, at the expense of paid talent and production values.

Decline in Quality

Demand for Tagalog movies peaked in the late '60s and early '70s, in spite of the general decline in the quality of films, and as a flow-on effect from the protectionist quotas President Marcos had imposed, limiting the number of foreign features shown on Filipino screens. It was clearly a case for Pinoy pride in an industry more than able to support its own cavalcade of superstars: the teen queens Nora Aunor and Vilma Santos, action legends Fernando Poe Jr. and Joseph Estrada, kings of comedy Dolphy and Chiquito, love teams of Amalia Fuentes and Romeo Vasquez, and of Susan Roces and Eddie Gutierrez. Gone was the widespread notion held before the '60s that Filipino cinema was merely a second-rate imitation of Hollywood. The microcosm had truly come of age.

Much of the credit for the boom in both the export and domestic film markets in the late '60s and early '70s must be attributed to President Ferdinand and First Lady Imelda Marcos, whose influence and control extended to every level of society until the People Power revolt in 1986 ousted them from office. Politics and personality conflicts aside, most

filmmakers agree that without the Marcoses' influence, the film industry would not have developed in the same way: whether imposing embargoes on foreign films, handing out tax concessions and cut-price hotel rooms for overseas film companies, or holding junkets for foreign film buyers, the Marcos couple had a very clear vision of taking Filipino cinema to the world's screens.

Roger Corman's "invasion" of 1971 to 1975 constituted the peak years of foreign productions or co-productions shot in the Philippines for the overseas drive-in market. Roger Corman, dubbed the King of the B's, was a phenomenally successful producer and director (*Little Shop of Horrors* [1960], the Vincent Price/Edgar Allan Poe series [1960-65]), who had toyed with independent film distribution since his Filmgroup days with his brother Gene in the late '50s. By 1971 Corman was increasingly dissatisfied with the manner his primary employer American International Pictures was handling his films—his apocalyptic counterculture comedy *Gasssss-s-s-s-s* (1970) was reportedly butchered beyond belief—and he decided to become a full-time independent film mogul. Thus New World Pictures was born, and having connections already in the Philippines with Eddie Romero and Cirio H. Santiago via his former star John Ashley, a lucrative partnership was sealed.

John Ashley's visit to the Philippines to work on Eddie Romero's *Manila, Open City* (1968) was just the start of Ashley's decade-long involvement with Romero, as actor and subsequently as producer and business partner. Ashley's family owned a chain of Oklahoma theaters and sealed a lucrative deal with Hemisphere Pictures' next venture, the phenomenally successful "Blood Island" trilogy of sleazy gore films starring Ashley: *Brides of Blood* (1968), *Mad Doctor of Blood Island* (1969), and *Beast of Blood* (1970). All three films feature Ashley on a tropical island stumbling upon the mutation experiments of an insane scientist; director Romero, along with *Mad Doctor of Blood Island's* co-director Gerardo de Leon, reworked their own *Island of Dr. Moreau* adaptation *Terror Is a Man* (a.k.a. *Blood Creature*, 1959) as an escalating series of blood-and-ooze-soaked set pieces, the likes of which the American drive-ins had never seen before. The cost-effective thrills of the Blood Island series prompted Romero to sever ties with Hemisphere in 1971, and formed a partnership with Ashley and two other businessmen named Four Associates Ltd. to supply Roger Corman's fledgling distribution company New World Pictures, among other distributors, with genre product. Their first effort, a bloodied werewolf movie picked up by New World called *The Beast of the Yellow Night* (1971), inspired Corman to send Jack Hill to direct *The Big Doll House* (1971), a lurid tropical women-in-prison potboiler starring the next black action queen Pam Grier, which opened the

floodgates to many other low-rent production companies looking for their next tropical exploitation hit, including New World's follow-up with Grier and Hill, the similarly themed *The Big Bird Cage* (1972).

The Filipino jungle became such an essential backdrop at early '70s drive-ins that almost immediately there were imitators. From Dimension Pictures—Corman's former associates at New World, Charles S. Swartz and his wife Stephanie Rothman—came two faux-Filipino prison features filmed in Puerto Rico: *Sweet Sugar* (1972) and *Terminal Island* (1973). Jack Hill's former producer in Switzerland, Erwin C. Dietrich, assigned the ubiquitous Spaniard Jess Franco to direct a series of increasingly vile jungle-bound exploitation pictures such as *Women Behind Bars* (a.k.a. *Des diamants pour l'enfer*, 1975) and *Barbed Wire Dolls* (a.k.a. *Frauengefängnis* and *Caged Women*, 1975), while Corman himself commissioned Joe Dante and Allan Arkush to send up the entire Filipino cycle (as the hilarious film-within-a-film *Machete Maidens of Mora Tau*) in the New World self-parody *Hollywood Boulevard* (1976). Meanwhile, former Hemisphere associates Sam Sherman and director Al Adamson fashioned a "fake" Filipino film, *Brain of Blood* (1971) in California, and hired Asian actors make the film look like an official sequel to the Blood Island films (S. Sherman, personal communication, June 6, 2008).

The women-in-prison films soon lost their appeal in favor of female gun-toting revolutionaries; the black action or "blaxploitation" craze demanded at least one or two black actresses to spice up the action, along with nudity, sleaze, blood, and violence. Cirio H. Santiago had supplied Corman with his Premiere production unit for *The Big Doll House* (1971) and *The Big Bird Cage* (1972), and soon was directing his first export titles for New World: *Savage!* (1973) starring black football star James Iglehart; a stewardess kung fu sex comedy, *Fly Me* (1973); and *TNT Jackson* (1974), a female revenge actioner inspired by Pam Grier's *Coffy* (1973) and *Foxy Brown* (1974), starring black actress and former *Playboy* Playmate Jeanne Bell. More "girls with guns" films appeared—Jonathan Demme's *The Hot Box* (1972), Eddie Romero's *Savage Sisters* (1974), Santiago's *Ebony Ivory and Jade* and *The Muthers* (both 1976)—not to mention horror movies, sexploitation, tropical adventures, and the inevitable kung fu actioners.

Enter the Dragons

It wasn't just the drive-in exploitation market but popular culture the world over that would see another kick to the head in 1973: the kung fu phenomenon, personified in both *Enter the Dragon* (1973) exploding across screens worldwide, and the subsequent death of its star Bruce Lee. The demand for Eastern action films was as instantaneous as it was global in

nature. Audiences wanted Asian faces, martial arts action, and scenery; no longer the exotic background, they graduated to become the foreground. For the Philippines, the effect was electric. In the same fashion the Spanish desert would stand in for Texas or Mexico during the Spaghetti Western cycle of the '60s and early '70s, the Philippines could double effortlessly for any Asian country you'd care to name. Its traditional martial arts was usurped for a while by the Japanese-influenced karate craze in the early to late '60s, and this was reflected in karate-themed action films aimed at Pinoy moviegoers already dizzy on goon punch-ups. *Karatistas* like blackbelters Tony Ferrer, Eddie Rodriguez, brothers Roberto and Rolando Gonzalez, and Bernard Belleza were the first wave of home-grown stars; enter the Dragon, Bruce Lee, and a second wave emerged—Ramon Zamora, Rey Malonzo, Ulysses Tzan, Robert Lee—who had happily traded karate kicks for kung fu chops, becoming known affectionately as the “Bruce Lees of the Philippines.” Thus the goon film morphed with little effort from the spy films and karate adventures of the '60s into the kung fu revenge operas of the '70s.

Hong Kong naturally led the Asian charge into the international market, with local producers not far behind, providing facilities, forming co-productions, or making distribution deals with Hong Kong companies for their own kung fu movies. Bobby A. Suarez of BAS Films was without a doubt the most successful of all Filipino producers of kung fu films in the '70s. Working his way to salesman at the Rank Organization's Film Exchange in Manila, he moved to Hong Kong at the start of the kung fu boom, learning the international film trade from working with the Shaw Brothers before starting his own companies, Intercontinental Film Distributors based in Hong Kong and RJR Film Exchange in Manila. He quickly moved into producing his own martial arts films starting with *Cosa Nostra Asia* (1973), a *Godfather*-themed kung fu picture with American actor Chris Mitchum and Filipino karatista Tony Ferrer. After a string of similar films, all sold internationally, he formed BAS Films and started to direct, commencing with a series of kung fu/superspy films, the Cleopatra Wong films (1977-79). By splicing together a combination of then-popular genres and utilizing an already-established network of pan-Asian funding and global distribution, Bobby managed to sell his modestly budgeted action movies the world over—an incredible feat, considering most Filipino producers relied on outside help, primarily from Hong Kong or the US. Bobby achieved a first among Filipino filmmakers: he became a one-man export factory, and was successfully selling his drive-in features—his last theatrical release was *American Commandos* (1986) with Mitchum and John Phillip Law—long after the drive-ins had closed shop.

Corman's initial exit from the Philippines in 1975 with *Cover Girl Models* (1975), a threadbare production even for Corman, is a clear signal the market was saturated with Filipino-made product; in his own words, he'd gone to the well too many times. "We found the prices rising very heavily," Corman wrote, "and one of the reasons for shooting there was that it was economically suited to low-budget filming – partially the exotic locales and partially economics. But as the prices rose, we retreated to the United States" (di Franco, 1979, p. 202). The mid-'70s signaled a decline in box-office returns—drive-ins started to close one by one, to be killed off forever by the home video market—and for drive-in movies the result was a dramatic drop in budget and quality. The once highly bankable genres of blaxploitation, kung fu, soft-core sleaze (including women-in-prison films), and horror simply ran out of steam in an exploitation-saturated market, and were yet to be replaced by the '80s stock genres of jungle action, ninja, Viet Nam War, and post-apocalypse movies.

The local industry saw a further slowing down of film production in the early '80s, around the same time a new kind of studio system emerged out of the independent free-for-all. Brash, youthful players became the new dynastic powerhouses and, to a certain extent, remain so to this day. Regal Films was first on the scene, a former distributor-turned-production company bankrolled by the tremendously wealthy Monteverde family and with astute Chinese-Filipino matriarch "Mother" Lily Monteverde at the helm. By the early '80s Regal had cornered the lucrative youth market, binding cinephile young turks (Elwood Perez, Joey Gosiengfiao, Peque Gallaga) to long-term contracts grinding out one movie after another in each genre guaranteed to make money. Despite Mother Lily's strict requirements of content and budget—in the '90s, Regal pioneered the *pito-pito* (literally seven-each) movie, taking just seven days to shoot and seven days to edit—her Regal Babies, as her star actors and directors became known, would continue to usurp low expectations and deliver studio product that were genuinely and surprisingly good, and on occasion (the early films of Lav Diaz, for instance, made under Gosiengfiao's supervision as head of Regal's Good Harvest wing), groundbreaking and wildly idiosyncratic. Regal's success was closely matched by Viva Films, formed by Vicente del Rosario Jr. in 1981; by 1983, Viva's output of nine features was second only to Regal's eleven (Campos, 1984, p. 23), with a number of hungry independents nipping at their heels—Seiko, Solar, Cine Suerte, and of course Fernando Poe Jr.'s FPJ Productions and Dolphy's RVQ Productions.

Enter the Government

Imelda Marcos, on her part, oversaw the essential infrastructure required for a healthy film culture: the formation of the Experimental Cinema of the Philippines (ECP) and the building of the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) and the controversial Manila Film Center (MFC), where a number of workers died during its rushed construction attempting to meet its impossible January 1982 deadline for the unveiling of Imelda's inaugural Manila International Film Festival (Lico, 2003, p. 124). From its inception in January 1982 until the Marcos regime was ousted in 1986, the ECP was a funding body and think-tank with the Marcoses' Western-minded and classically educated daughter Imee installed as Director-General. In addition to screening films once considered scandalous (one of its initial screenings was Nagisa Oshima's graphically erotic story *In the Realm of the Senses* [1976]), the ECP boosted what is considered the last Golden Age of Philippine Cinema, one in which filmmakers were offered the illusion of complete artistic freedom at a time of great political turmoil: the closing years of the Marcos government, the gradual loosening of the decade-long martial law and its strict censorship guidelines (Tiongson, 1994). Within the four walls of the MFC, Pinoy cineastes were introduced to a new generation of auteurs (Peque Gallaga, Tikoy Aguiluz), in addition to those established filmmakers (Lino Brocka, Mario O'Hara, Celso Ad. Castillo) already infused with a very European sensibility of filmmaker-as-artist while working within the genre-bound studio system. This concept was quite foreign to the studios, in which the producer still wielded supreme control over each movie like in '30s Classical Hollywood practice. The ECP was a much-needed boost of confidence for the flagging spirits of those frustrated filmmakers already recognized and respected in the international festival circuit, but who had yet to see any tangible form of commercial distribution abroad.

Imelda Marcos's supreme offering to the film gods was the Manila International Film Festival. Having already attempted and failed to buy the American film market (A. Maharaj, personal communication, July 7, 2007) and relocate it to Manila, she decided instead to bring the foreign movie industry to Manila on January 18-29, 1982, showcasing not only Filipino culture and cinema, but the glory of the Philippines under the culturally (if not politically) enlightened Marcos regime. Expectations were running high, and local auteurs prepared themselves to be packaged and sold to the world. At the festival, local industry bigwigs rubbed shoulders with Hollywood celebrities and international filmmakers like John Frankenheimer and Satyajit Ray; one of the festival's brightest shining stars was the First Lady herself, cutting the ribbon at the press preview next to Franco Nero and

Brooke Shields, while the world's press noted just how glamorous a Filipino film festival could be.

Once the junket was officially over and dust had settled, it was time to evaluate the real benefits to the local film industry. Out of the sixty local productions offered through the Philippine Motion Pictures Producers Association, around 20 were sold for a grand total of approximately \$500,000 (Benitez, 1982, p. 5), a disappointment to most companies expecting easy winnings on their home turf. English-dubbed action films were the fastest sellers, regardless of the destination or country of origin. The exception was Eddie Romero's *Kamakalawa* (1981), one of several films sold to Southeast Asian neighbors. On the exploitation front, Cirio Santiago's women-in-prison film *Hell Hole* (1978) was picked up for six territories for \$95,000, and his goon actioner *Suicide Commandos* (1981) was picked for international release by German distributor Atlas International. But by far the single winner of the festival was the Caballes family's Liliw Productions, whose James Bond spoofs starring the two-foot nine-inch midget martial artist Weng Weng were sold worldwide. *For Y'ur Height Only* (1982) via its executive producer Dick Randall reportedly netted US \$200,000 (Local Films Sold, 1982, p. 19), a mind-boggling amount for a novelty action film considering its initial 850,000 peso price tag—around US \$30,000, using current exchange rates. In West Germany alone, Weng Weng's three latest films for Liliw, *Agent 00* (1981), *For Y'ur Height Only*, and the unfinished Western *D'Wild Wild Weng* (1982), were sold to distributor Kurt Palm for a reported \$90,000 (Astorga-Garcia, 1982, p. 19).

In the months following the MIFF, the word “co-production” started to gain momentum. Roger Corman attended the MIFF symposium on film production and talked at length on his long association with the Philippines and particularly with Cirio H. Santiago (“Primer on the Manila International Festival,” 1982, p. 7). Their combined output had slowed since the mid-'70s, when the dwindling drive-in market forced Corman's distribution company New World Productions to slash costs. In January 1982 the home video market was still in its infancy and the uncomfortable transitional phase was forcing low-budget companies to pool resources with other countries. Co-productions, Corman prophetically announced to the MIFF symposium, constituted the growing trend. “In doing co-productions,” he stated, “I'm primarily interested in the American market, so that I hire an American scriptwriter, director, and actor” (*Starwatch*, 1982, p. 7). Santiago, of course, was an exception to the rule, but even he agreed their films for the international market required Caucasian lead actors in front of the cameras, and an American scribe working on story, pacing, and dialogue in a specifically American fashion (C. H. Santiago, personal communication,

February 27, 2007). Within twelve months, both the combined efforts of the Marcoses' campaign and the demands of the international market had worked in the Philippines' favor. The Philippines was invaded once again by foreigners, this time carrying movie cameras. The Europeans would arrive in droves—in sporadic forays at first, starting with Antonio Margheriti for his *Deer Hunter-meets-Apocalypse Now* movie *The Last Hunter* (1980). By the time Margheriti had decided to relocate to the Philippines and film most of his '80s output in the jungle, he was joined by Bruno Mattei, Gianfranco Parolini, Ruggero Deodato, Ignacio Dolze, and many others, who were also fighting for space with Hong Kong and Japanese crews, Australian producer Antony I. Ginnane and Swiss producer Erwin C. Dietrich, and productions from West Germany, Belgium, France, and even Malaysia.

The Americans, too, were back in droves, particularly after Cirio H. Santiago returned almost full-time to Roger Corman's fold. His *Mad Max 2* (1982) clone *Stryker* (1983) was a spectacular success overseas, and its foreign agent, Trinidad-born Anthony Maharaj, was quick to capitalize on its success with a string of genre films produced by him and directed by Santiago (A. Maharaj, personal communication, July 7, 2007). Corman, it seems, regretted turning down *Stryker* and offered to bankroll a series of post-apocalypse films back-to-back, quickly followed by a string of Viet Nam-War movies inspired by *Platoon* (1986) and "white-fu" martial arts films.

The buzzing hive of international productions and co-productions was matched within the local Tagalog-language industry, following its love affair with melodramas, Western parodies, teen weepies, steamy adult-oriented fare, and the inevitable goon action films. The plethora of gunplays and punch-'em-ups featured their local tough guys, from ageing superstars Fernando Poe Jr. and Joseph Estrada, to the new kids on the block: Phillip Salvador, Dante Varona, Anthony Alonzo, Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr., and Ronnie Ricketts. These so-called goon films of the '80s were simply the continuation of a long-standing filmic legacy in the Philippines since what may be termed the '60s' Golden Age of Goon Cinema.

There were countless films with "*Kumander*" ("Commander") or "Vengeance" in the title, movies based on the real-life or fictionalized exploits of military or guerrilla commanders, rebels, lone gunmen, ghetto heroes, and villains. Their local versions of *First Blood* (1982) drew upon their own backyard's political turmoil—*Magindanao* (1982) and *Kris Commando* (1987) are both set in the troubled southern Moro, predominantly Muslim territory, while *Sparrow Unit* (1987) follows a rural communist National People's Army (NPA) group during the long-running Communist uprising in the countryside. These plot points are of specific interest to the Filipino

audience but are entirely lost on an overseas crowd; for them, the Philippine countryside may as well be an unnamed Asian or South American country, or in the case of Cirio H. Santiago's desert post-apocalypse films populated with Caucasian extras, in any country for that matter. Despite the sheer volume of productions—over 120 features in 1983 alone, over half of them goon actioners (Pareja, 1994)—Tagalog films remained, as always, impenetrable to the rest of the world. They had their own star system, their own genres and subgenres, their own rich cinematic tradition that was constantly being drawn upon, reworked, and parodied. Perhaps most significantly, their films were never dubbed into English or, unlike the vast majority of Hindi films, subtitled. Like Hong Kong, Taiwan, Indonesia, and many other countries, the '80s' export boom, spurred on by the rise of the VHS market, finally revealed the mysterious Filipino genre film to the international market.

More than a theoretical quantum shift in quality, the '80s export explosion was fueled by a time-specific shift in genre. From the '50s until the mid-'70s, the majority of jungle-bound war films made either by Filipino companies or by foreign companies shooting in the Philippines was set in the Pacific arena of World War II. The mini-industry in wartime nostalgia would be forever changed by the intense interest surrounding Francis Ford Coppola's seemingly doomed production of *Apocalypse Now* (released 1979). Almost overnight, Coppola had started the first New Wave of jungle war films, set during the Viet Nam War, and mostly filmed in the Philippines: *The Boys from Company C* (1978, beating *Apocalypse Now's* release date by almost a year), *Purple Hearts* (1981), and later with *Platoon* (1986) and *Born on the Fourth of July* (1988). Demand for similarly themed action films allowed the second-tier film companies—smaller, more independent production and distribution companies such as the US-based Cannon Films—to fill the gaps in the market with their own mild variations on the formulae.

Cannon Films was the first American company since the '70s to exploit the cost-cutting benefits of shooting in the Philippines, starting with *Enter the Ninja* (1981), an effective B revenge film starring American action specialist Christopher George and Japanese martial arts trainer-turned-actor Sho Kosugi. They were one of the first companies to exploit their own subgenre with *American Ninja* (1985), also filmed in the Philippines; Cannon also followed *Rambo: First Blood Part II* (1984) with a cookie-cutter blockbuster *Missing in Action* (1985), featuring a gruff and grizzled Chuck Norris tearing up the Viet Nam (read: Philippine) jungle with an M16 looking for American prisoners of war. Before long, Cannon's modest action films became almost as iconic as their more expensive inspirations. Within two years, there was Cannon's official sequel to *Missing in Action*, their own derivative clone *Behind Enemy Lines* (a.k.a. *POW The Escape*, 1986) and

scores of carbon copies from American, Italian and Asian companies, not to mention copies-of-copies from within the Philippines itself. *Enter the Ninja*, too, spawned its own following while riding the coattails of Chuck Norris' own *white-fu* brand of martial arts movies. Co-star Sho Kosugi became the new ninja subgenre's superstar and until it had exhausted itself towards the end of the '80s, the hugely popular cycle would contain one of two essential ingredients: a white actor in a ninja outfit, or the star-thrower Kosugi himself. The kung fu film had morphed into the ninja movie, and the Philippines, as always, was happy to oblige.

The Video Boom

By the mid-'80s the home video market was booming, and there was a mad scramble for titles. The huge VHS market in the United States was an obvious destination, but so were smaller, less discriminating markets: Greece, Finland, West Germany, Central and South America, Pakistan, Egypt, and the Middle East. Genre titles with micro-budgets allowed international buyers with shallow pockets to purchase movies that resembled—at a distance, at least—their Hollywood prototypes. The quality demands of the home video market were so much lower than the cinema market: much smaller screens allowed for a diminished image quality, and would eventually cancel out the need to shoot on 35mm film. With genre titles in particular, consumer expectations are somewhat lower than those of the art-house or quality drama crowd; it makes no difference to a Greek-speaking action fan if the film is poorly dubbed or not, so long as there are the requisite number of explosions or eviscerations. Rather than film prints, a distributor would merely require a Betacam master and key art for the VHS cover, and they had an instant release for a modest outlay. And such diminishing returns, thanks to the Philippines' lower cost of living, would still translate into a modest profit for the producers once converted back into pesos.

Most Tagalog exports would never have made it past the Manila customs office if it weren't for the efforts of Davian International Ltd., a distribution and later production company formed in 1986 by Hong Kong-born David Hung and his Philippine partner Vivian Andico (hence the "Dav-" + "-ian" company name). Like Bobby A. Suarez before him, Hung had already muddied his boots in the low-budget distribution trenches as one of Joseph Lai's general managers for Intercontinental Film Distribution Ltd., and was keen to source saleable action films for his fledgling company, primarily from his own backyard. Davian purchased the international rights to Tagalog-language films, recut them from their customary two-hour running time to a more serviceable 90 minutes, and supervised the dubbing into English, more often than not in Quezon City. Hung would then set up

a booth at Cannes and the American Film Market and peddle his wares directly to overseas distributors. In this way, even the most generic Tagalog action films of other local producers—such as the Dante Varona vehicle *Commander Lawin* (1981) and *The Day They Robbed America* (1985)—could be given a Davian makeover and raffled off to one of their less-discerning customers.

Davian International distributed both Cine Suerte and Sunny Films, owned by producer Sunny Lim, who was originally the Singapore distributor for Bobby A. Suarez before he set up Sunny Films and produced a number of action films in the Philippines, Malaysia, and the US. Producer and director Ben Yalung's Cine Suerte followed a predictable course of goon actioners (*Sparrow Unit* [1987], *Lost Command* [1988], and one of Fernando Poe Jr.'s two Tagalog export films *The Lethal Hunt* [1985]) with the outrageous komik-book snake-monster antics of *Zuma* (1985) and its sequel *Zuma II: Hell Serpent* (1987). Davian's main Filipino competitor in the export game during this period was Cinex, the distribution company run by Conrad "Boy" Puzon and Pio C. Lee, who also ran the production company F. Puzon Film Enterprises. Cinex officials were regulars at Cannes and the American Film Market, where their eclectic roster—Rey Malonzo's urban revenge actioners, the *Mad Max*-inspired *W* (a.k.a. *W Is War*, 1983) and even the Catholic gore of *The Killing of Satan* (1983)—were sold to video companies throughout Europe.

There was gold fever in the air, and the cry from the hills brought the hopeful and the hopeless running. The result was a series of one-off films for export by smaller companies, bankrolled by rich families or enterprising businessmen who all fancied themselves as film producers. Despite the humming from the hive, there was surprisingly little movement from the larger studios. Regal Studios, having already established its dominance over local screens in the early '80s, tested the waters only three times—with *Phantom Soldiers* (1987), *Commander* (a.k.a. *The Last American Soldier*, 1988) and *Sgt. Clarin: Bullet for Your Head* (1990)—and despite sizable returns on all three investments, remained content with its long-established local market strategies (J. Gaines, personal communication, July 7, 2007). From Viva, other than the children-friendly martial arts fantasy *Ninja Kids: Phantom Force* (1985), there was complete silence on the export front.

It wasn't just ninjas and angry POWs who emerged from the Filipino jungles. During the peak export years of 1986-88, Davian joined other distributors—the West German company Atlas, for instance—in taking some baffling choices of Filipino genre films to the world's small screens. The Pinoy "King of Comedy," Dolphy, finally made it onto American home video with his Chuck Norris spoof *Action Is Not Missing* (1987). Competing

for shelf space were two Rambo parodies starring the stick-thin comic Palito, in a supporting role in third-tier comedian Redford White's *Johnny Rambo Tango* (1985), and a lead in the astounding *No Blood No Surrender* (1986), in which the skeletal Palito runs around the jungle carrying a machine gun twice his size. Cinex trotted out boy-wonder actor Niño Muhlach's pint-sized tribute to *Clash of the Titans* (1982), *Stone Boy* (a.k.a. *Boy God* [1983], a co-production with the Muhlach family's D'Wonder Films), a fantasy film almost as wild as *Magic of the Universe* (1987), a garish horror movie for perverse adults and frightened children. On the extreme end of the entertainment spectrum, Solar Films marketed the grotesque and almost hallucinatory horrors of *Silip* (a.k.a. *Daughters of Eve*, 1985) as a Filipino sex movie, presumably faring better than their two doomed action exports featuring the future action star, the Australian-born Gary Daniels, in *Final Reprisal* (1988) and *The Secret of King Mahi's Island* (1989).

Without a doubt, the busiest of the low-rent Filipino outfits throughout the '80s was the Silver Star Film Co., formerly Kinavesa Films International. Chinese-Pinoy (or "Chinoy") businessman K.Y. Lim had been involved with Hong Kong productions filmed in the Philippines as far back as 1973's *Tiger Force* (a.k.a. *Kill the Tiger*), and the '70s kung fu boom proved lucrative for Lim, who made his own carbon copies for the local market (*They Call Him Bruce Lee* [1978] featured "the Bruce Lee of the Philippines," or one of them, at least: future export action star Rey Malonzo). After a series of goon actioners featuring all-Filipino casts, Lim started thinking globally, and reasoned that a number of European faces would enhance opportunities to sell his films internationally. He chose Richard Harrison—American star of countless spaghetti Western and spy films of the '60s and kung fu movies of the '70s—who arrived on a plane from his Hong Kong home, and the motley crew of what would become Silver Star's stock company of familiar faces. The Viet Nam-era war film *Intrusion: Cambodia* (1981) was a minor hit, but Lim's standard US \$50,000 budget practically guaranteed a healthy return. Richard Harrison returned to Lim's meager payroll several times—*Fireback*, *Rescue Team*, *Hunter's Crossing* (all 1983), *Blood Debt* (1984)—to be replaced by fellow Americans Bruce Baron, Max Thayer, Ron Marchini, and Spanish-born Romano Kristoff, and backed by the ever-familiar faces of Jim Gaines, Mike Monty, Nick Nicholson, Don Gordon Bell, Jim Moss, and many others. Some, like Nicholson, Bell, and Mike Cohen, were ex-US military and presumably at home on Lim's ersatz battlefields; others were actors or would-be actors looking for adventure in the Philippines' frontier conditions.

Urban revenge movies with martial arts gave way to the inevitable ninja cycle following *Enter the Ninja* (1981), and *Rambo: First Blood Part II*

(1985) continued the seemingly endless string of jungle actioners, and Lim was able to keep up the exhaustive output by maintaining his Hong Kong connections: film print processing, points of international distribution, and access to the wider Asian market. Cannon Films would also pick up many of Silver Star's products and redistribute them as "filler": bonus films to bulk out a video package of their own productions. The fact that Lim not only survived the decline of both the Filipino export and Tagalog markets, and maintains the same office in Manila's Chinatown peddling the Silver Star Film Co. back catalogue to the overseas DVD trade, is testament to his staying power, resourcefulness, and penny-pinching tenacity.

Down to the Present

Even Lim could sense the downturn in the export trade, and by 1989 he had slowed down his production line from four to five features in the early '80s to just two a year (Leavold, 2009), finding it harder than ever to find international buyers. By the late '80s, American cable was cutting into the VHS market, and producers could no longer afford foreign locales so far from home, choosing the Caribbean and South America instead. The VHS boom that had carried the indies through the '80s was subsiding, and audiences appeared to be tiring of the glut of shabby and derivative Filipino action films that came in the wake of *Rambo* and *Platoon*. Even Cirio H. Santiago's four to six features a year for Corman's Concorde-New Horizons slowed down in the early '90s and had all but dried up by 1996.

British-born screenwriter Mike Cassey began working in the Philippines in the late '80s and witnessed the decline of both the local and export film markets. "Most local movie people attribute the collapse of the movie industry here to the upsurge in video/DVD piracy" (Cassey, 2009), he told me in an interview.

I totally disagree with that simplistic notion. In my humble opinion, there were two reasons for the collapse of Philippine cinema. On the technical front, international movie distributors and audiences were becoming more demanding and sophisticated. Audiences expected their movies to have live sound (not dubbed), be in stereo (UltraStereo was the fad for B movies back then), be in widescreen, have great soundtracks and (thanks to MTV) be fast-paced and tightly edited. Local producers and directors just didn't keep up with the changing cinematic trends but instead kept churning out the same old low-tech fodder. The local post-houses also did not update their equipment.

The international distributors were just not buying these products anymore.

The other main reason for the collapse of the Philippine movie industry was local corruption. By the late '80s, the Philippines had earned bad press in America and Hong Kong for ripping off foreign movie productions. Unfortunately, this is a label that still sticks. It's part of the Philippine psyche to think short-term and not long-term. But these stories soon spread around the international movie community and the Philippines were [*sic*] unofficially blacklisted. (Personal communication, August 4, 2009)

Certainly, conditions within the Philippines were making film production increasingly difficult, even for the local market. With the ouster of the Marcos government in 1986, a succession of leaders took his place, none of whom shared his dream of consolidating the Philippines' place as the cultural jewel of Southeast Asia; it would be possible to speculate though that if his regime had persisted, the industry would have faced an entirely different set of tensions, stemming from the politically neutral or supportive commercialist sector vs. the anti-dictatorship avant-garde, with B-film practitioners increasingly positioned in the crossfire. Under the post-Marcos presidencies of Corazon Aquino, Fidel V. Ramos and—most surprising of all—former superstar Joseph Estrada, pragmatism and economic self-interest were paramount, and by the early '90s the Filipino film industry was almost taxed into bankruptcy. The meteoric rise of the two media superblocks—local TV, radio, and cinema combined under the two corporate banners of ABS-CBN and GMA—coincided with Hollywood's almost complete hegemony over the country's cinema screens, no longer independent stand-alone concerns but multiplex screens as part of corporate-controlled shopping centers. Tagalog-language features were competing with one another for the ten to fifteen percent of cinema screens available to them, while the flashier Hollywood product took the rest; thus television became the focus of revenue and star power, and cinema gradually lost its luster. By 2008 the Philippines, a former filmmaking and export dynamo, was down to 58 feature films for the ever-shrinking local market (Film Academy of the Philippines, 2009).

As an example, the studio that supplanted the earlier mainstream giant, Regal Films, was more closely allied with television, even as Regal itself envisioned a programming of productions aimed primarily at TV-broadcast viewers. Since 1993, Star Cinema (the film production and distribution wing

of ABS-CBN TV) has captured the lion's share of an ever-dwindling market; at this point, it is in television where real power and money can be found. Economic realities have forced many independent producers out of the industry permanently, leaving film production predominantly in the hands of a new studio hegemony that's a virtual carbon copy of the '50s studio system, with a similarly parochial view of production, audience demands, and distribution. More depressing is its defensive, closed-door approach to new ideas, relying instead on what studio heads believe to be tried and tested formulae. Hence the relentless avalanche—these days slowing almost to a crawl—of star vehicles, and copies of copies of Hollywood blockbusters. In short: a microcosm of Hollywood in its own decline.

Despite the industry's own gloomy forecast, there are signs of activity, even in the export arena. Even the unfashionable phrase “co-production” started to be bandied about once again—Roger Corman renewed his filmmaking partnership with Cirio H. Santiago in 2005 and produced several features for the direct-to-DVD market until Santiago died in September 2008 during the filming of the post-apocalyptic movie *Road Raiders* (still incomplete at the time of writing). Italian director Bruno Mattei also returned to the Philippines in 2004 after a 15-year break and shot over seven features for producer Giovanni Paolucci before he too passed away in May 2007, having just completed *Zombies: The Beginning* (released 2008). Although Mattei's features have a home-movie feel about them, shot on digital HD cameras for a fraction of the budget of his previous Philippine-licensed features, it is nevertheless encouraging that the pioneering spirit of the B films still lives. Bobby Suarez is still pitching a sequel to the '70s' *Cleopatra Wong* adventures, genre specialists Rico Ilarde and Erik Matti are currently in talks with UK-based production company Mondo Macabro, and Paolucci is looking for a replacement for his reliable friend Mattei to continue making micro-budgeted B films for the international DVD market. There are stirrings in the B-film export trade, in the same way the words “digital” and “indie” are breathing life into an ossified film industry at large. The whims of international market will doubtlessly never allow the halcyon days of the '60s, '70s, and '80s to return, but the export trade will almost certainly exist in a scaled-down version, maximizing its smaller budgets with digital technology and connections to the direct-to-DVD market. And the Filipino genre film—as we define it, a disreputable creature skulking near the bottom of nearly every critic's list—will be scrawnier and may not travel well, but as always, be ever-mutating and resilient as hell.

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Notes

[1] The most reliable source of information on numbers of films produced in the Philippines until 1994 is in the "Output of Local Films: 58" article of Lena S. Pareja's *Diamond anniversary of Philippine cinema* program (1994, pp. 65-74), posted on the Film Academy of the Philippines' website at <http://www.filmacademyphil.org/?p=1231>.

[2] Philippines' entry to the Berne Convention, posted at http://www.kipo.ke.wipo.net/treaties/en/Remarks.jsp?cnty_id=1010C.

[3] Both actor-producers Fernando Poe (Sr.) and Leopoldo Salcedo ran their own successful companies in the '40s and '50s.

[4] The paper's author acknowledges that the term "Goon Cinema" may have been less popular among local practitioners and commentators; the term was more often used as an instance of transgressive reinscription (as was the term B film, for example) among foreign participants in Philippine-set productions. Another trend, which has continued to the present, is the "promotion" of former goons beyond starring roles, to elected officials (San Diego and Bordadora, 1991, n.p.). More contemporary examples include stunt men Lito Lapid and Rey Malonzo. Joseph Estrada, who also portrayed henchmen (most notably in Gerardo de Leon's *The Moises Padilla Story* [1961]), is known not just as an ousted President of the Republic but also as progenitor of a number of son and nephews in political positions.

[5] A good background to the evolving drive-in market in the United States from the '50s to the '70s can be found in Ray (1991).

[6] Nepomuceno's hyperbole extended beyond the films' credits to their posters. For a collection of posters from Nepomuceno Productions, see Santos (2008b, n.p.).

[7] See the transcript of the Supreme Court ruling posted at <http://www.supremecourt.gov.ph/jurisprudence/2002/dec2002/139479.htm>.

[8] "*Bomba*," according to actor Ernie Zarate, is a Tagalog variation of the term "blond bombshell," and was also used in the '60s to describe "a damaging exposé." "Pene," the term for pornographic films (after the *bomba* period) showing actual penetration, is short for "*penekula*," and is also Spanish for "penis" (See Zarate, 2004).

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Appendix: Filipino Export Films, International Productions and Co-Productions Shot in the Philippines

As part of my Ph.D. thesis on the history of genre filmmaking in the Philippines, I am proposing a list of features filmed in the Philippines, either by local or foreign companies, for international release. These include international productions such as *Apocalypse Now* and *Platoon*, Cirio Santiago's co-productions with Roger Corman and others, European and Asian films using the Philippines as a location, and local films dubbed into foreign languages for international markets.

[**Editors' note:** Andrew Leavold mentioned on his Facebook source page (<https://www.facebook.com/notes/andrew-leavold/filipino-export-films-international-productions-and-co-productions-shot-in-the-p/10151233146984647>) that "This list is far from complete, and is merely a work in progress. Additions, retractions and suggestions are more than welcome;" we have rearranged the list to alphabetize titles without their initial articles. Please note as well that the descriptions in the parentheses end with year of release, preceded by Leavold's short research/descriptive notes. On the Facebook page, the notes are followed by exactly 70 comments, the last of which was posted in November 2012; Leavold updated his list to incorporate the corrections and/or additions brought up in the comments.]

Above the War/Search and Destroy (Japan, 1989)
Action Is Not Missing (Davian International, 1987)
Adventurers, The (1990s Hong Kong, 1995)
Aladdin and the Adventure of All Time (Cirio Santiago, 2000)
Alfredo Sebastian (1980s Tagalog Exports, 1981)
Alien from the Deep (Margheriti/Gico, 1989)
Ambush Bay (US Productions 1960s, 1966)
American Commandos (Bobby A. Suarez, 1986)
American Force 2: The Untouchable Glory (IFD, 1988)
American Force 3: High Sky Mission (IFD, 1988)
American Force 4: Soldier Exterminators (IFD, 1988)
American Kickboxer 2 (Davian International, 1993)
American Ninja (Cannon Films, 1985)
An American Guerrilla in the Philippines (US Productions 1950s, 1950)
Angel in the Dark (Davian International, 1991)
Angel of Destruction (Cirio Santiago, 1994)
Angel on Fire/Matira Ang Matibay (Godfrey Ho/Philip Ko, 1995)
Angelfist (Cirio Santiago, 1993)

Apocalypse Now (1970s International Productions, 1977-79)
Arizona Kid, The (Early Cirio Santiago, 1970)
Armour of God II: Operation Condor (1980s Hong Kong, partly shot in the Philippines, 1991)
Arnis the Sticks of Death (Kung Fu, 1979)
Assault Platoon (1980s Filipino Productions for Export, 1988)
Atrocities of the Orient (Early Filipino Exports, 1948)
Attack and Destroy (Kinavesa/Silver Star, 1981)
Back Door to Hell (Hellman, 1964)
Back to Bataan (US Productions 1940s, 1945)
Bad Blood (Malaysia's Hvd Entertainment, 1996)
Bamboo Gods and Iron Men (1970s Cirio Santiago, 1974)
Barracuda: Terror of the Sea (1980s Tagalog Exports, 1984)
Battle Rats (Cine Suerte/Davian, 1989)
Bayside at Midnight (Japan, details unconfirmed)
Beach Red (US Productions 1960s, 1967)
Beast of Blood (Ashley/Eddie Romero, 1970)
Beast of the Yellow Night (Corman/New World, 1971)
Beggar, The/Ang Pulubi (Nepomuceno, 1969)
Behind Enemy Lines (1990s International Productions, 1997)
Beyond Atlantis (Eddie Romero, 1973)
Beyond the Call of Duty (Cirio Santiago, 1992)
Big Bird Cage, The (Corman/New World, 1972)
Big Doll House, The (Corman/New World, 1971)
Bionic Boy, The (Bobby A. Suarez, 1977)
Birds of Passage (Recent International Productions, 2001)
Black Cobra 2 (Margheriti Jr, 1988)
Black Cobra 3 (Margheriti Jr, 1990)
Black Dragon (Kung Fu, Ron Van Clief, 1974)
Black Dragon, The (Bobby A. Suarez, 1974)
Black Mama White Mama (Eddie Romero, 1973)
Black Mamba (Ashley/Tagalog Exports, 1974)
Black Market Love (Recent International Productions, 2008)
Black Panther of Shaolin/Bamboo Trap (Leo Fong, 1975)
Blackbelt (Cirio Santiago, 1992)
Blackbelt II (Cirio Santiago, 1993)
Blackfire (Kinavesa/Silver Star, 1985)
Blasting Bullets (Davian, 1985)
Blind Rage/The System (Leo Fong, 1976)
Blood Chase (Kinavesa/Silver Star, 1989)
Blood Debts (Kinavesa/Silver Star, 1984)

Blood Drinkers, The (Pinoy Horror, 1964)
Blood Hands (Kinavesa/Silver Star, 1990)
Blood Hero/The Bloody Hero (Kung Fu, 1973)
Blood Hunt (Kinavesa/Silver Star, 1981)
Blood of Bataan (Early Filipino Exports, 1953)
Blood Ring (Davian International, 1991)
Blood Ring 2 (Davian International, 1995)
Blood Run (1990s International Productions, 1994)
Blood Surf (2000s Exports, 2000)
Blood Thirst (Dupont, 1965/71)
Blood War (1980s Tagalog Exports, 1986)
Bloodfist (Cirio Santiago, 1989)
Bloodfist 2050 (Cirio Santiago, 2005)
Bloodfist II (Cirio Santiago, 1990)
Blowback 2 (Japan, 1992)
Body Blow (Recent International Productions, David deCoteau, 2010)
Body Parts/Vital Parts (Cirio Santiago, 2001)
Bodyguard (1980s Tagalog Exports/Viking Films, 1986)
Boni En Klayd/Los Intocables De Redford White (1980s Tagalog Exports, 1981)
Born on the 4th of July (1980s International Productions, 1989)
Born to Fight (Mattei/Flora Film [Couyoumdjian], 1989)
Born to Gamble (1980s Hong Kong, 1987)
Bourne Legacy, The (Recent International Productions, 2012)
Boy God/Stone Boy (Cinex/Boy Puzon, 1982)
Boys in Company C, The (1970s International Productions, 1978)
Braddock: Missing in Action 3 (Cannon Films, 1988)
Brides of Blood (Ashley/Eddie Romero, 1967)
Brides of Sulu (Early Filipino Exports, 1937)
Brokedown Palace (1990s International Productions, 1999)
Brothers (1980s International Productions/Australia, 1982)
Brothers in War (Italians in the Philippines or Santo Domingo?/Fulvia Film [De Angelis], 1989)
Bruce and the Shaolin Bronzemen (Kung Fu, 1980)
Bruce the Super Hero (Dick Randall, 1979)
Bruce's Fists of Vengeance (Kung Fu/Kinavesa, 1980)
Bruka Queen of Evil (Jimmy Pascual/ HK Fantasy/Horror, 1975)
Bye Bye Vietnam (Camillo Teti/Fulvia Film [De Angelis], 1988)
Caged Fury (1980s Cirio Santiago, 1982)
Caged Heat II: Stripped of Freedom (Cirio Santiago, 1994)
Calibre .357 (Liliw International, 1984)

Cannibal World (Mattei Part 2, 2004)
Cannibals - Legend or Reality (Paolucci, 2008)
Case of Honor, A (Romero/Ginnane, 1988)
Caxambu! (US Productions 1960s, 1967)
Chain, The (1990s International Productions, 1996)
Chaku Master (Rey Malonzo, 1974)
Champion Fighter/The Fighter the Winner/Grease Gun Brothers (IFD, 1991?)
Chateau de Roses (Japan, 2005)
Checkered Flag or Crash! (American Misc. Part 2, 1977)
Children of An-Lac, The (1980s International Productions, 1980 TV Movie)
China and Sex (Massacessi, 1993)
Chinese Kamasutra (Massacessi, 1993)
Circle of Fear (1980s International Productions/Clark Henderson, 1989)
Classified Operation (Cinex/Boy Puzon, 1983)
Closer to Home (1990s International Productions, 1995)
Clouds/Alapaap (1980s Tagalog Exports, 1984)
Cobra Mission (De Angelis/Dietrich, 1986)
Cobra Mission 2 (Italians in the Philippines or Santo Domingo?/Fulvia Film [De Angelis], 1989)
Cobrador (1980s Tagalog Exports, 1986)
Codename: Wildgeese (Margheriti/Dietrich, 1984)
Combat Killers (US Productions 1960s, 1968)
Commander Lawin (Davian/Sunny, 1986)
Commander, The (Margheriti/Ascot [Dietrich], 1987)
Commando Invasion (Kinavesa/Silver Star, 1986)
Commando Leopard (Margheriti/Dietrich, 1985)
Cop Game (Mattei/Flora Film [Couyoumdjian], 1988)
Cosa Nostra Asia (Bobby A. Suarez, 1973)
Counterthrust! (Eddie Romero, 1959)
Cover Girl Models (Corman/Cirio Santiago, 1975)
Crackdown (1980s International Productions/John Garwood, 1987)
Crazy Bunch, The/Hepe (1980s Tagalog Exports, 1980)
Crime Stopper (Kinavesa/Silver Star, 1990)
Cross Mission (Alfonso Brescia/AM Trading International, 1988)
Crossbone Territory (1980s Filipino Productions for Export, 1985)
Cruel Horizon (Belgium, 1989)
Cruel Stone, The/Yûsha No Hihô (Japan, 2005)
Cry of Battle (Eddie Romero, 1963)
Curse of the Vampires (Pinoy Horror, 1966)

Curse/Cannibal Curse (1980s Hong Kong, 1987)
Dance of the Dwarfs (1980s International Productions, 1983)
Dangerous Life, A (1980s International Productions, 1988)
Dangerous Passion (Kinavesa/Silver Star, 1998)
Dark Side of a Woman, The (Mattei, 2005)
Dark Tide (1990s International Productions, 1994)
Darna (Early Filipino Exports, 1950)
Daughters of Satan (Schenck, 1972)
Day of the Trumpet/Cavalry Command (Eddie Romero, 1957)
Day They Robbed America, The/The Sangley Point Robbery (Davian/Sunny, 1985)
Dead Men Can't Dance (1990s International Productions, 1997)
Deadly Commando/Suicide Force (1980s Tagalog Exports, 1982)
Deadly Target (1980s Tagalog Exports/Viking Films, 1986)
Deadly Target /Walang Kasukat sa Tapang (Godfrey Ho/Philip Ko, 1994)
Deadringer (Kinavesa/Silver Star, 1985)
Death Bond (Cinex/Boy Puzon, 1989)
Death Force/Fighting Mad (1970s Cirio Santiago, 1978)
Death Match (Japan, details unconfirmed)
Death Raiders (1980s Tagalog Exports, 1984)
Deathfight/Rage (Sellers/Maharaj, 1992)
Deathhead Virgin (American Misc, 1974)
Delta Force 2: The Colombian Connection (Cannon Films, 1990)
Demon of Paradise (Cirio Santiago, 1987)
Demonstone (Ginnane, 1989)
Desert Warrior (Kinavesa/Silver Star, 1988)
Desperate Hours (Malaysia's Hvd Entertainment, 1997)
Destroyers, The (1980s Cirio Santiago, 1985)
Devil Woman (Jimmy Pascual/ HK Fantasy/Horror, 1974)
Devil's Angels/Devil's Three/Pay or Die (Bobby A. Suarez, 1981)
Dirty Games (Cinex/Boy Puzon, n.d.)
DNA (1990s International Productions, 1997)
Dog Tags (1980s International Productions, 1985)
Don't Cry, It's Only Thunder (1980s International Productions, 1982)
Doomsdayer (Sellers, 2000)
Double Blast (Davian International, 1994)
Double Edge (Kinavesa/Silver Star, 1986)
Double Target (Mattei/Flora Film [Couyoumdjian], 1987)
Dragon, The Lizard, The Boxer, The (Ramon Zamora, 1977)
Dragons Never Die (Jimmy Pascual/Kung Fu, 1974)
Driving Force (Ginnane, 1988)

Drug Connection (Japan, shot in Japan, USA and the Philippines, 1992)
Dune Warriors (Cirio Santiago, 1991)
D'Wild Wild Weng (Liliw International, 1982)
Dynamite Johnson (Bobby A. Suarez, 1978)
Eagle of the Jungle (Sunny, 1987?)
Eastern Condors (1980s Hong Kong, 1987)
Ebony Ivory and Jade (1970s Cirio Santiago, 1976)
Emanuelle in Manila (Japan, details unconfirmed)
Emergency Call/Kinkyû Yobidashi (Japan, 1995)
Enemy/Fatal Mission (1980s International Productions/George Rowe, 1990)
Enforcer from Death Row, The (Leo Fong, 1975)
Enter the Ninja (Cannon Films, 1982)
Equalizer 2000 (Cirio Santiago, 1987)
Escape from Blood Plantation/Island of the Bloody Plantation (Dietrich, 1983)
Escape to Mindanao (US Productions 1960s, 1968)
Escape to Nowhere/Battle Geese (Davian International, 1990)
Eternal Fist/Fist of Steel (Davian International, 1991)
Ethan (Dupont/Grofe Jr, 1964)
Evidence (Kung Fu, 1974)
Expendables, The (Cirio Santiago, 1988)
Eye of the Eagle (Cirio Santiago, 1987)
Eye of the Eagle 2: Inside the Enemy (Cirio Santiago, 1989)
Fantastic Sword, The (HK Fantasy/Horror, 1976)
Far East (1980s International Productions/Australia, 1982)
Fast Gun (Cirio Santiago, 1993)
Fatal Chase (Godfrey Ho/Philip Ko, 1993)
Fatal Desire (1990s Hong Kong, 1998)
Fatal Vacation (1980s Hong Kong, 1989)
Field of Fire (Cirio Santiago, 1991)
Fighter, The/The Kickfighter (Maharaj, 1987)
Fighting Dragon/Challenge the Dragon, The (Kung Fu, w/Yusuka Kurata, 1975)
Fighting Spirit (Kinavesa/Silver Star, 1992)
Final Mission (1980s Cirio/Maharaj, 1984)
Final Reprisal (1980s Filipino Productions for Export/Solar, 1988)
Fireback (Kinavesa/Silver Star, 1983)
Firebird Conspiracy (Cinex/Boy Puzon, 1983-85)
Firecracker/Naked Fist (1980s Cirio Santiago, 1981)
Firehawk (Cirio Santiago, 1993)

Firing Line, The (Kinavesa/Silver Star, 1991)
Fist of Glory (Davian International, 1992)
Five and the Skin (France, 1982)
Flight to Fury (Hellman, 1964)
Fly Me (Corman/Cirio Santiago, 1973)
For Y'ur Height Only (Liliw International, 1981)
Forbidden Women (Early Filipino Exports, 1948)
Force of Shaolin Boxer (Cinex/Boy Puzon, 1980)
Forever Emmanuelle/Laure (France, 1976)
Forgotten Warrior (1980s International Productions/Ron Marchini, 1986)
Fortress in the Sun (Tagalog Exports, 1975)
Fortress of the Dead (Montgomery/Grofe Jr, 1965)
Fortunes of War (Sellers, 1994)
From Hell to Borneo (Montgomery/Grofe Jr, 1964)
Future Hunters (1980s Cirio/Maharaj, 1986)
Game of Death!, The (Ramon Zamora, 1974)
Genghis Khan (Early Filipino Exports, 1950)
Get My Son: Dead or Alive (1980s Tagalog Exports, 1982)
Get the Terrorists (Cinex/Boy Puzon, 1987)
Going Back (Recent International Productions, 2001)
Golden Chaku, The/Bruce and the Golden Chaku (Ramon Zamora/Rey Malonzo, 1977)
Golden Nightmare, The (1990s Hong Kong, 1998)
Golden Triangle (Kung Fu, 1975)
Goodbye America (Sellers, 1997)
Green Eyes (1970s International Productions, 1977 TV Movie)
Guardian Angel (Godfrey Ho/Philip Ko, 1994)
Guerrillas in Pink Lace (Montgomery/Grofe Jr, 1964)
Guys from Paradise, The (Japan, 2000)
Hamburger Hill (1980s International Productions, 1987)
Hard to Kill (Godfrey Ho/Philip Ko, 1993)
Headhunters, The (Tagalog Exports, 1973)
Heated Vengeance (1980s International Productions/Edward D. Murphy, 1985)
Heatseeker (1990s International Productions/Albert Pyun, 1995)
Hell Camp (1980s International Productions, 1986)
Hell Hole/Women of Hell Island/Escapes from Hell Hole/Guardian Angels (1980s Cirio Santiago, 1981)
Hell Raiders (Grofe Jr, 1986)
Heroes Blood/The 13th Mission (1980s Filipino Productions for Export, 1988)

Heroes for Hire (Kinavesa/Silver Star, 1984)
High Velocity (American Misc. Part 2, 1976)
High Voltage (1990s Hong Kong, 1995)
Hill 171 (Davian/Sunny, 1987)
Hitman the Cobra/Kumander Sumulong: 1940-1970 (IFD, 1986)
Honey I Love You (Japan, details unconfirmed)
Hong Kong 97 (1990s International Productions/Albert Pyun, 1997)
Hong Kong, Manila, Singapore (Shaw Brothers, 1965)
Horror of the Blood Monsters (Al Adamson, w/50s caveman footage from the Philippines, 1970)
Hostage Syndrome (Cinex/Boy Puzon, 1988)
Hot Box, The/Hell Cats (Corman/New World, 1972)
House of Pleasure, The (Massacessi, 1993)
Huk! (Montgomery/Grofe Jr, 1958)
Hunt for Eagle One, The (Cirio Santiago, 2006)
Hunt for Eagle One: Crash Point, The (Cirio Santiago, 2006)
Hunted Hunter, The (1990s Hong Kong, 1997)
Hunted, The (Nepomuceno, 1970)
Hunted, The (Davian International, 1989)
Hunter's Crossing (Kinavesa/Silver Star, 1983)
Hunters of the Golden Cobra (Margheriti/Gico/Regal? Flora Film [Couyoumdjian]?, 1982)
Hustler Squad (1970s Cirio Santiago, 1976)
I Am Blushing (Sweden, 1981)
I Racconti Della Camera Rossa (Massacessi, 1993)
Igorota (Nepomuceno, 1968)
Impasse (US Productions 1960s, 1969)
Impetus Fire (1980s Hong Kong, 1988)
Impossible Kid, The (Liliw International, 1982)
Indio (Margheriti, 1988)
Indio 2: The Revolt (Margheriti, 1990)
Intrusion Cambodia (Kinavesa/Silver Star, 1983)
Invaders of the Lost Gold/Greed/Horror Safari (Dick Randall, 1981)
Island of the Living Dead (Mattei, 2006)
Jail: The Women's Hell, The (Mattei, 2006)
Jailbreak 1958 (Cinex/Boy Puzon, n.d.)
Jiboa (Unkn, 1989)
Johnny Rambo Tango (1980s Tagalog Exports, 1985)
Joy and Joan (France, 1985)
Jungle Raiders (Margheriti, 1985)
Jungle Rats (1980s Filipino Productions for Export, 1987)

Jungle Wolf (1980s International Productions/Ron Marchini, 1986)
Just a Damned Soldier (Ferdinando Baldi/Regal, 1988)
Karate Warrior (Fabrizio De Angelis/Fulvia Film [De Angelis], 1987)
Karate Warrior 2 (Fabrizio De Angelis/Fulvia Film [De Angelis], 1988)
Kid and the Gunfighter, The/The Gunfighter (1980s Tagalog Exports, 1983)
Kieu (Vietnam, 2006)
Kill Zone (Cirio Santiago, 1993)
Killer Instinct (Cirio/Ginnane, 1987)
Killer vs Ninjas (1980s Tagalog Exports, 1984)
Killing of Satan, The (Cinex/Boy Puzon, 1983)
Kiss the Sky (1990s International Productions, 1998)
Kris Commando (Sunny, 1987)
Labyrinth of Love, The (Massacessi, 1993)
Land of Death (Mattei, 2003)
Land of Scarecrows (South Korea/France, 2008)
Last American Soldier, The/The Commander (Ignazio Dolce/Regal, 1988)
Last Dance of August 15th (Japan, 2005)
Last Flight to Hell (Ignazio Dolce/Gico, 1990)
Last Hunter, The (Margheriti/Flora Film [Couyoumdjian], 1980)
Last Platoon/Angel Hill (Ignazio Dolce/Gico, 1988)
Last Stand at Lang Mei/Eye of the Eagle 3 (Cirio Santiago, 1989)
Leathernecks (Ignazio Dolce/Gico, 1988)
Legacy (Sellers, 1998)
Leopard Hunting (1990s Hong Kong, 1998)
Lethal Hunt/Partida, The (Cine Suerte/Davian, 1985)
Lethal Panther 2/Magkasangga sa Batas (Godfrey Ho/Philip Ko, 1993)
Lethal Panther/Deadly China Dolls (Godfrey Ho/Philip Ko, 1991)
Live By the Fist (Cirio Santiago, 1993)
Longest Hundred Miles, The (US Productions 1960s, 1967)
Losers, The (Garfield/Smith, 1970)
Lost Battalion (Eddie Romero, 1960)
Lost Command (Cine Suerte/Davian, 1988)
Love in Ambush (1990s International Productions, 1997)
Mad Doctor of Blood Island (Ashley/Eddie Romero, 1969)
Mad Dog (Kinavesa/Silver Star, 1984)
Mad Killer (1980s Tagalog Exports, 1985)
Mad Warrior/Clash of the Warlords (1980s Tagalog Exports, 1984)
Madonna and the Dragon, The (1980s International Productions, 1989)
Magic Curse (HK Fantasy/Horror, 1977)
Magic of the Universe (1980s Tagalog Exports, 1986)
Magindanao (1980s Tagalog Exports, 1982)

Maharlika (Marcos/Nepomuceno, 1970)
Man on the Run/The Kidnappers (Eddie Romero, 1958)
Manila, Open City (Nepomuceno/Eddie Romero, 1968)
Mannigan's Force (1980s Filipino Productions for Export, 1988)
Mantis Boxer (Kung Fu, 1979?)
Marco Polo - Oriental Sex Journey (Massacessi, 2003/05)
Marianna (1980s Hong Kong, 1982)
Master Samurai (Bobby A. Suarez, 1974)
McBain (1990s International Productions, 1991)
Merrill's Marauders (US Productions 1960s, 1962)
Midnight Angels (1990s Hong Kong, 1997)
Missing in Action (Cannon Films, 1984)
Mission Batangas (US Productions 1960s, 1968)
Mission Manila (1980s International Productions, 1987)
Mission Terminate/Return of the Kickfighter (Maharaj, 1987)
Moro Witch Doctor (Eddie Romero, 1964)
Movie in Action (Kinavesa/Silver Star, 1987)
Murder in the Orient/Manila Gold (Leo Fong, 1974)
Murder on the Menu (Malaysia's Hvd Entertainment, 1998)
Muthers, The (1970s Cirio Santiago, 1976)
Mutiny in the South Seas (West Germany, 1965)
My Lai Four (Paolucci, 2011)
Naked in the Dark/Hubo sa Dilim (1980s Tagalog Exports, 1985)
Naked Vengeance (1980s Cirio/Maharaj, 1985)
Nam Angels (Cirio Santiago, 1989)
Narco Dollar (Cinex/Boy Puzon, 1988)
Night Games (Roger Vadim, 1982)
Night of the Cobra Woman (Corman/New World, 1972)
Nightmare Honeymoon (Malaysia's HVD Entertainment, 1997)
Nine Deaths of the Ninja (1980s International Productions, 1985)
Ninja Kids: Phantom Force (1980s Tagalog Exports, 1986)
Ninja Squad, The/Hatulan si...Totoy Angustia (IFD, 1986)
Ninja Ultimate Challenge/Twin Fists for the Blackmasters J (IFD, 1986)
Ninja Warriors (Kinavesa/Silver Star, 1985)
Ninja, Warriors from Beyond/Maestro Bandido (IFD, 1986)
Ninja's Force (Kinavesa/Silver Star, 1984)
No Blood No Surrender (1980s Tagalog Exports, 1986)
No Dead Heroes (1980s Filipino Productions for Export, 1987)
No Man Is an Island (US Productions 1960s, 1962)
No Place to Hide (US Productions 1950s, 1955)
Noriega: God's Favorite (Recent International Productions, 2000)

Not another Mistake (Maharaj, 1988)
Obsessed (Bobby A. Suarez, 1988)
Omegans, The (US Productions 1960s, 1968)
Once Before I Die (US Productions 1960s, 1965)
One Man Army (Cirio Santiago, 1994)
One Percent Full (Recent International Productions, 2007)
One-Armed Executioner, The (Bobby A. Suarez, 1983)
Operation: Get Victor Corpus the Rebel Soldier (Davian/Sunny, 1987)
Orient Escape (Mattei, 2005)
Outlaw Inferno (Cine Suerte, 1981)
Over My Dead Body (1980s Tagalog Exports, 1983)
Pacific Connection, The/Stick Fighter (Nepomuceno, 1974)
Pacific Inferno (American Misc. Part 2, 1979)
Passage to Hell (Japan, 1988?)
Passionate Strangers, The (Eddie Romero, 1966)
Perfect Duo (Davian International, unconfirmed)
Phantom Raiders (Kinavesa/Silver Star, 1988)
Phantom Soldiers (1980s Filipino Productions for Export/Regal, 1987)
Platoon (1980s International Productions, 1986)
Platoon: The Warriors/Diegong Bayong (IFD, 1987)
Pleasure Island (Dick Randall, 1981)
Portofino: The Philippines (Recent International Productions, 2009)
POW the Escape/Behind Enemy Lines (Cannon Films, 1986)
Power Connection/Tapang sa Tapang (Godfrey Ho/Philip Ko, 1995)
Primary Target (1980s International Productions/Corman/ClarkHenderson, 1988)
Project: Kill (American Misc. Part 2, 1975)
Purple Hearts (1980s International Productions, 1984)
Purple Storm (1990s Hong Kong, partly shot, 1999)
Rage of Justice (1980s Tagalog Exports, 1987)
Raging Angels (1990s Hong Kong, unconfirmed, 1998)
Raging Anger, The (Sunny, 1987)
Raging Vendetta (Cinex/Boy Puzon, n.d.)
Raider Platoon (Davian/Sunny, 1988)
Raiders for Victory (Kinavesa/Silver Star, 1982)
Raiders of Atlantis/Atlantis Interceptors (Deodato, 1983)
Raiders of Leyte Gulf (Eddie Romero, 1962)
Raiders of the Paradise (Davian/Sunny, 1980)
Raiders of the Sun (Cirio Santiago, 1992)
Ravagers, The (Eddie Romero, 1965)
Raw Force (1980s International Productions/Edward D. Murphy, 1982)

Raw Target (Davian International, 1995)
Rebel Soldier, The (1980s Tagalog Exports, 1986)
Red Roses for a Call Girl/Manila Tattoo/True Confessions of Diana (Bobby A. Suarez, 1986)
Rescue Team (Kinavesa/Silver Star, 1983)
Resort Murders, The (Malaysia's Hvd Entertainment, 1998)
Return from the River Kwai (1980s International Productions, 1989)
Return of Bruce (Kung Fu, 1977)
Return of the Dragon (Ramon Zamora, 1974)
Revenge for Justice (1980s Tagalog Exports, 1985)
Revenge of the Bushido Blade/The Last Reunion (Leo Fong, 1978)
Revenge of the Lady Lighter (Kung Fu, 1973)
Revenge of the Stolen Stars (1980s International Productions, 1985)
Ride the Tiger (Montgomery/Grofe Jr, 1970)
Robo Warriors (Cirio Santiago, 1997)
Robowar (Mattei/Flora Film [Couyoumdjian], 1989)
Rocky Tan-Go IV (1980s Tagalog Exports, 1986)
Sabotage/Sabotage 2 (Liliw International, 1979)
Saigon Commandos (1980s International Productions/Corman/Clark Henderson, 1987)
Samar (Montgomery/Grofe Jr, 1962)
Sanda Wong (Early Filipino Exports, 1955)
Sando in the Diplomat's Daughter (Japan, 1988)
Savage in the Orient (1980s International Productions, 1983)
Savage Justice (Romero Jr/Ginnane, 1988)
Savage Sisters (Eddie Romero, 1974)
Savage! (Corman/Cirio Santiago, 1973)
Scavengers, The (Eddie Romero, 1959)
Score (Japan, 1995)
Sea Devils (1990s International Productions, 1998)
Search for Vengeance (Cinex/Boy Puzon, 1983)
Searchers of the Voodoo Mountain (Bobby A. Suarez, 1984)
Secret of King Mahi's Island (1980s Filipino Productions for Export/Solar, 1989)
Secret of the Incas' Empire (Cine Suerte/Italians, 1987)
Secret of the Sacred Forest, The (US Productions 1960s, 1970)
Secrets of Women (Mattei, 2005)
Secrets of Women 2 (Mattei, 2005)
SFX Retaliator (Kinavesa/Silver Star, 1987)
Sgt Clarin: A Bullet for Your Head (1990s Tagalog Exports, 1990)
Shadow of the Dragon (Ramon Zamora, 1973)

Shaolin Master (Rey Malonzo, 1976)
Shocking Asia (West Germany, 1976)
Shocking Asia II: The Last Taboos (West Germany, 1985)
Shudder on the Skin, A (Mattei, 2005)
Siege of Firebase Gloria, The (Ginnane, 1989)
Silip/Daughters of Eve (1980s Tagalog Exports, 1985)
Silk (1980s Cirio Santiago, 1986)
Silk 2 (Cirio Santiago, 1989)
Silver Dragon Ninja [uses HK film Trap, shot in the Philippines] (IFD, 1986)
Sisterhood, The (Cirio Santiago, 1988)
Slash (Kinavesa/Silver Star, 1984)
Sleeping Dragon (Jimmy Pascual/Kung Fu, 1975)
Sloane (1980s International Productions, 1984)
Soldier Boyz (1990s International Productions, 1996)
Soldyer! (1980s Tagalog Exports, 1986)
South Seas Massacre (Tagalog Exports, 1974)
Sparrow Unit: The Termination Squad (Cine Suerte/Davian, 1987)
Spyder (Cirio Santiago, 1988)
Steel Claw, The (Montgomery/Grofe Jr, 1960)
Story of the Dolls/The Dolls (Germany, 1984)
Story of Woo Viet, The/God of Killers (1980s Hong Kong, 1981)
Stranglehold (Cirio Santiago, 1994)
Strike Commando (Mattei/Flora Film [Couyoumdjian], 1987)
Strike Commando 2 (Mattei/Flora Film [Couyoumdjian], 1988)
Stryker (1980s Cirio/Maharaj, 1983)
Sudden Death (Eddie Romero, 1975)
Sudden Thunder (Davian International, 1990)
Superbeast (Schenck/Garfield, 1972)
Supercock (Ross Hagen, 1975)
Surabaya Conspiracy, The (US Productions 1960s, 1969)
Surrender - Hell! (50s American Productions/De Leon, 1959)
Suspect, The (1990s Hong Kong, Ringo Lam, 1998)
Sweet Revenge (1980s International Productions, 1987)
Tarzan and the Brown Prince (Early Cirio Santiago, 1972)
Taste of Hell, A (Garfield/Smith, 1973)
Tazza: The High Rollers (South Korea, 2006)
Techno Warriors (Godfrey Ho/Philip Ko, 1998)
Techno Warriors 2: Lethal Combat/Digital Warriors (Godfrey Ho/Philip Ko, 1999)
Teppanyaki (1980s Hong Kong, 1984)
Terminal Virus (Cirio Santiago, 1995)

Terror in Paradise (Cirio Santiago, 1995)
Terror Is a Man/Blood Creature (Eddie Romero, 1959)
They Call Her Cleopatra Wong (Bobby A. Suarez, 1978)
They Call Him Bruce Lee (Kung Fu/Kinavesa, 1979)
They Call Him Chop Suey (Bobby A. Suarez, 1975)
Third Hand, The/Judgment Night (Grofe Jr, 1987)
Thirsty Dead, The (American Misc, 1974)
Three Lustketeers, The (1990s Hong Kong, 1998)
Tiger Force/Kill the Tiger (Kung Fu/Kinavesa, 1975)
Tiger Joe (Margheriti/Flora Film [Couyoumdjian], 1981)
Tigershark (1980s International Productions, 1987)
Time for Dying/Pipo, A (Nepomuceno, 1970)
TNT Jackson (Corman/Cirio Santiago, 1974)
Tomb, The (Mattei, 2006)
Too Hot to Handle (American Misc. Part 2, 1977)
Too Late the Hero (US Productions 1960s, 1970)
Top Mission/Diablo Force (Filmark, 1988)
Tornado/Last Blood (Margheriti/Gico? Flora Film [Couyoumdjian]?, 1983)
Tough Beauty and the Sloppy Slop (1990s Hong Kong, 1995)
Tough Cop (Cinex/Boy Puzon, 1987)
Trap/Cop Killer (1980s Hong Kong, 1982)
Treasure of the Moon Goddess (1980s International Productions, 1987)
Trident Force (1980s Filipino Productions for Export, 1988)
Trigon Fire (Kinavesa/Silver Star, 1989)
Triple Impact (Davian International, 1992)
Tropical Manila (South Korea, 2008)
Troublesome Night 4 (1990s Hong Kong, 1998)
Twilight People, The (Eddie Romero, 1973)
Ultimate Revenge (1990s Hong Kong, 1995)
Ultimax Force (Cinex/Boy Puzon, 1986)
Ultracop 2000/Magkasangga 2000 (Godfrey Ho/Philip Ko, 1993)
Up from the Depths (1980s Cirio Santiago, 1979)
US Commando/Jimbo (1980s Tagalog Exports, 1985)
Vampire Hookers (1970s Cirio Santiago, 1978)
Vengeance Squad (1980s Filipino Productions for Export, 1987)
Violent Zone (1980s International Productions/John Garwood, 1988)
Vulcan/Anak ng Bulkan (Cirio Santiago, 1997)
W/W Is War (Cinex/Boy Puzon, 1983)
Walls of Hell, The/Intramuros (Eddie Romero, 1964)
War Bus (Fernando Di Leo/Amerinda/Regal, 1986)

War City 3: The Extreme Project/Deadly Brothers (IFD, 1989?)
War City 4: Kingdom of Power/Bulldog (IFD, 1989?)
War City 5: Law of Honor/Maynila 1970: Panganib, Araw at Gabi (IFD, 1989?)
War without End (Kinavesa/Silver Star, 1986)
Warcamp/POW Deathcamp (Davian, 1983)
Warkill! (Montgomery/Grofe Jr, 1968)
Water Wars/Road Raiders (Cirio Santiago, 2009)
Wheels of Fire (1980s Cirio Santiago, 1985)
When Eagles Strike (Cirio Santiago, 2003)
White Force (Romero/Ginnane, 1988)
Wild Cats Attack! (Kinavesa/Silver Star, 1982)
Wild Force (Davian/Sunny, 1985)
Wild Whirlwind (Kung Fu, 1974)
Witch, The (HK Fantasy/Horror, 1975)
Woman Hunt, The (Eddie Romero, 1973)
Women in Cages (Corman/New World, 1972)
Women of Valor (1980s International Productions, 1986)
Wonder Women/The Deadly and the Beautiful (Ross Hagen, 1973)
Wounded in Action (US Productions 1960s, 1966)
Xtreme Warriors/Digital Man (Godfrey Ho/Philip Ko, 2001)
Year of Living Dangerously, The (1980s International Productions/Australia, 1982)
Zigzag (US Productions 1960s, 1963)
Zimitar (1980s Tagalog Exports, 1982)
Zombi 3 (Mattei/Flora Film [Couyoumdjian], 1987)
Zombi 4: After Death (Mattei/Flora Film [Couyoumdjian], 1989)
Zombies: The Beginning (Mattei, 2007)
Zuma (Cine Suerte, 1985)
Zuma II: Hell Serpent (Cine Suerte, 1987)